4
Saki
RITZ
KOBAYASHI

Saki
4
RITZ KOBAYASHI

IF I LOSE MY MATCH, I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE IT AGAIN.
THIS IS THE VIEW I SEE WHEN I WALK WITH MIYANAGA-SAN.

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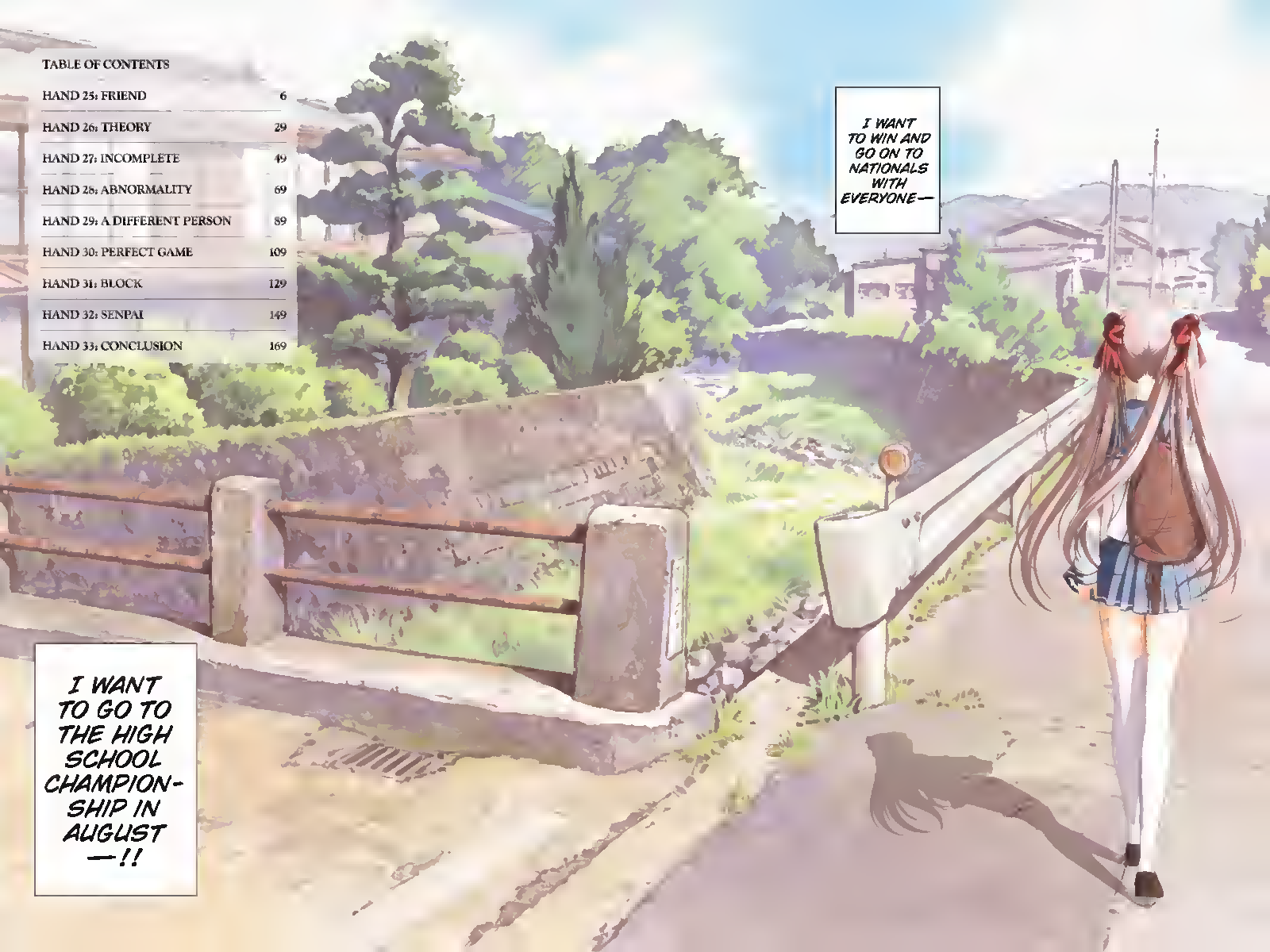
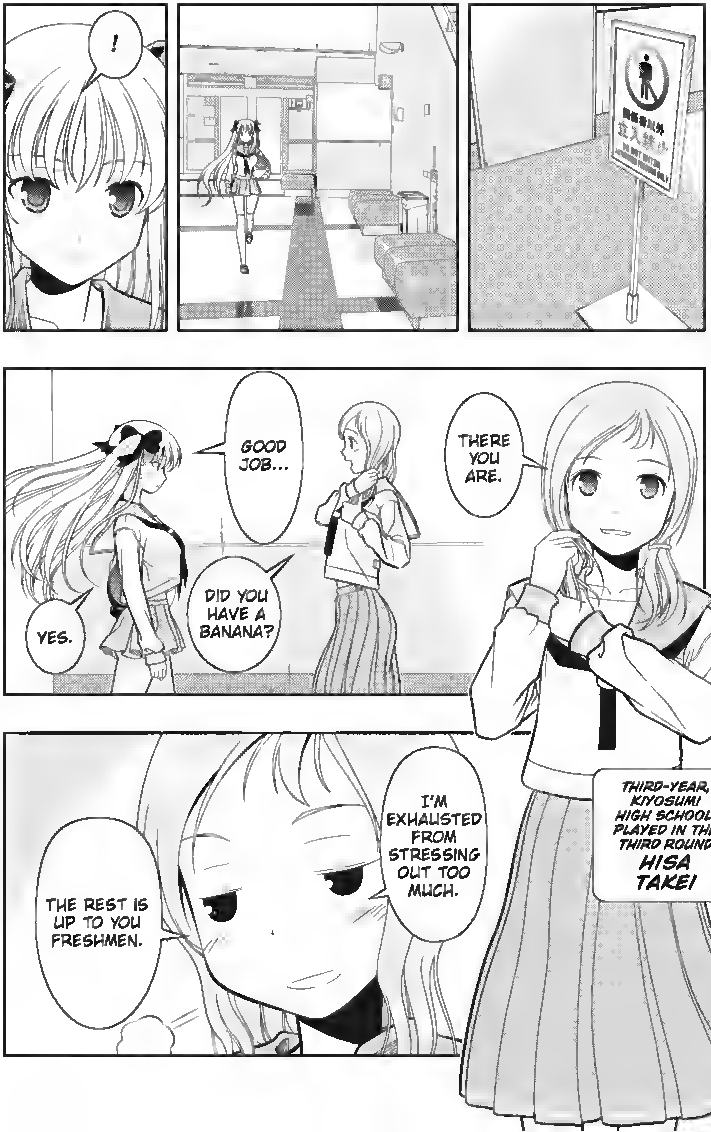


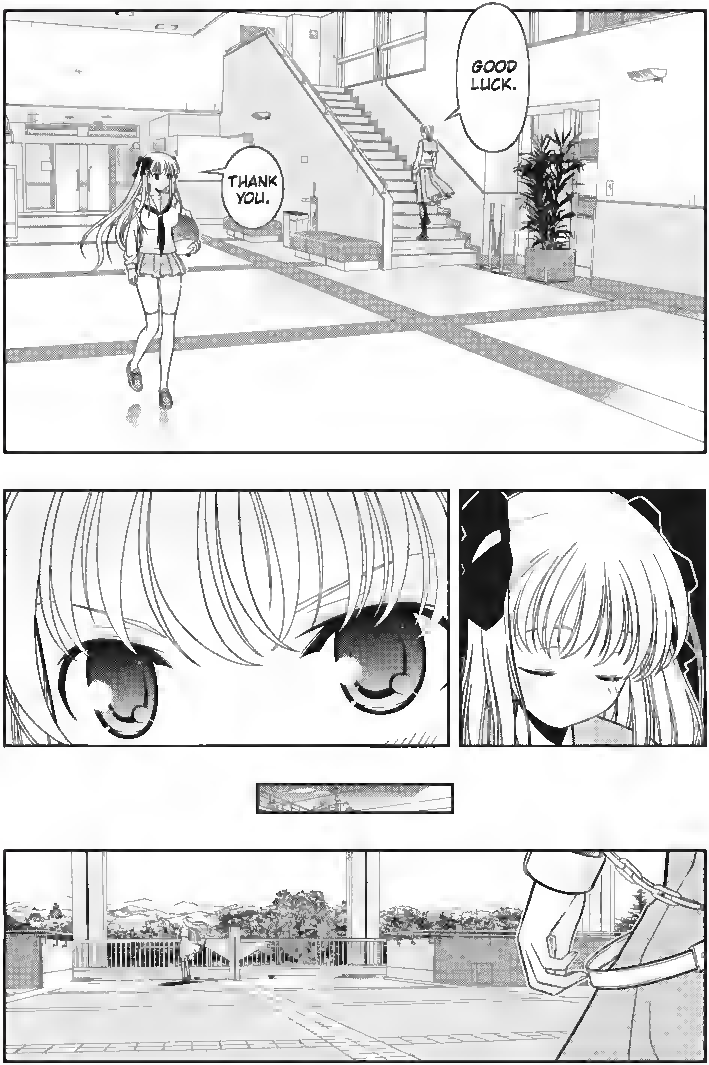
HAND 25: FRIEND

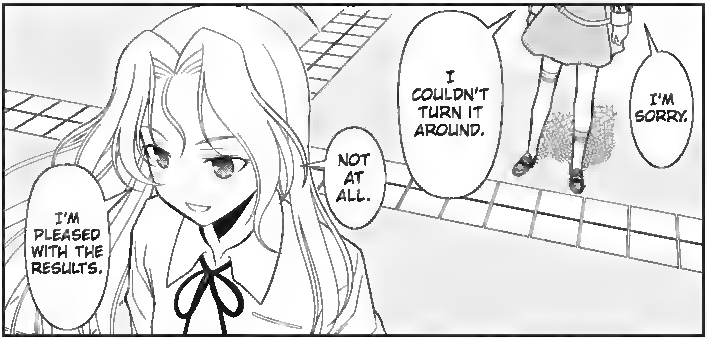
In the end, which team...
...will obtain the ticket to the national tournament !?

It's the second to last round of the prefectural qualifier finals — !!

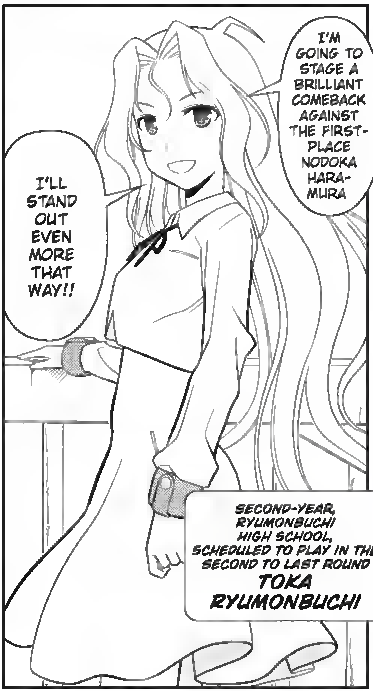
トアアア
CHEER
CHATTER
CHATTER
NODOKA HARA-MURA —!!
IT'S HARA-MURA!
HARA-MURA-SAN!
NOW THAT THE FINALS ARE UPON US, ARE YOU FIRED UP?
FIRED UP...
NOT ESPE-CIALLY ...
THEN YOU FEEL AS CONFIDENT AS USUAL!?
FIRST-YEAR, KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL, SCHEDULED TO PLAY IN THE SECOND TO LAST ROUND
NODOKA HARAMURA

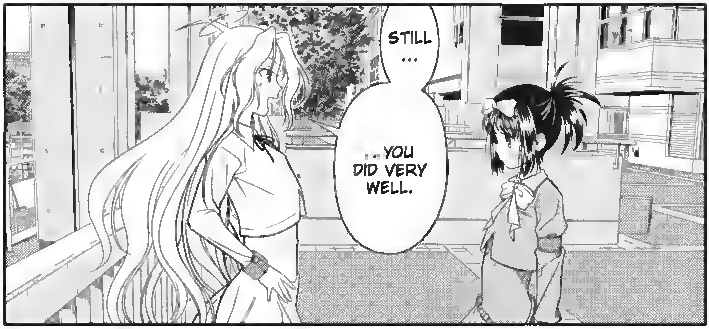

!
THIRD-YEAR, KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL, PLAYED IN THE THIRD ROUND
HISA TAKEI
I'M EXHAUSTED FROM STRESSING OUT TOO MUCH.
THE REST IS UP TO YOU FRESHMEN.
THERE YOU ARE.
GOOD JOB...
DID YOU HAVE A BANANA?
YES.

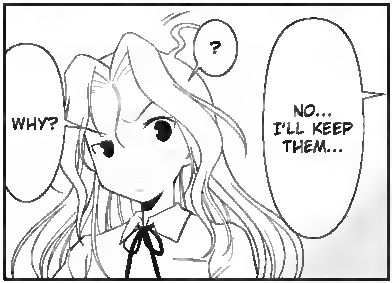

GOOD LUCK.
THANK YOU.

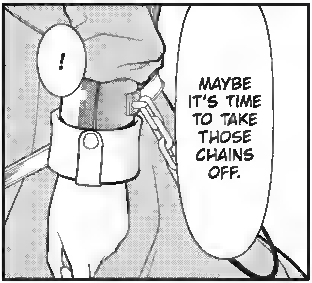

I'M SORRY.
I COULDN'T TURN IT AROUND.
NOT AT ALL.
I'M PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS.

WHAT, YOU DIDN'T THINK I'D PLANNED THAT FAR AHEAD !?
ER...
I MEAN, OF COURSE YOU DID!
SECOND-YEAR, RYUMONBUCHI HIGH SCHOOL, PLAYED IN THE THIRD ROUND
HAJIME KUNIHIRO


I'M GOING TO STAGE A BRILLIANT COMEBACK AGAINST THE FIRST-PLACE NODOKA HARA-MURA
I'LL STAND OUT EVEN MORE THAT WAY!!
SECOND-YEAR, RYUMONBUCHI HIGH SCHOOL, SCHEDULED TO PLAY IN THE SECOND TO LAST ROUND
TOKA RYUMONBUCHI

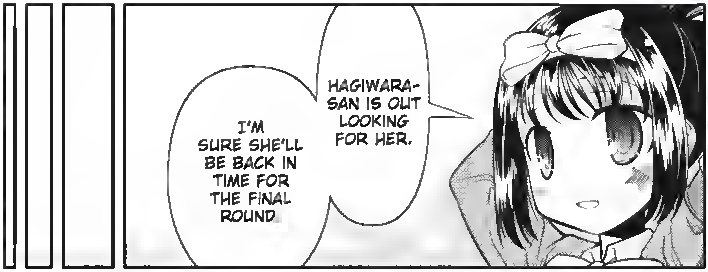

STILL ...
... YOU DID VERY WELL.


?
WHY?
NO... I'LL KEEP THEM...


!
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO TAKE THOSE CHAINS OFF.

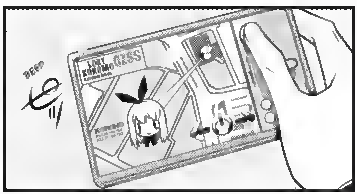
...THAT IF THESE CHAINS WERE REMOVED, I'D DRIFT A LITTLE FURTHER FROM YOU, TOKA.
I HAVE A FEELING ...

...BUT I'M ALWAYS AT YOUR SIDE THERE.
B-BUT...
...YOU NEVER WEAR THEM AT HOME.
I KNOW...
BLUSH
OF COURSE. I'M YOUR PERSONAL MAID...
WHERE THE HECK HAS SHE GONE!? MY MATCH IS ABOUT TO START! THAT BIRL IS INFURIATING!
TH-THAT'S RIGHT! KOROMO!!
ALTHOUGH KOROMO IS AROUND SOMETIMES TOO


HAGIWARA-SAN IS OUT LOOKING FOR HER.
I'M SURE SHE'LL BE BACK IN TIME FOR THE FINAL ROUND.

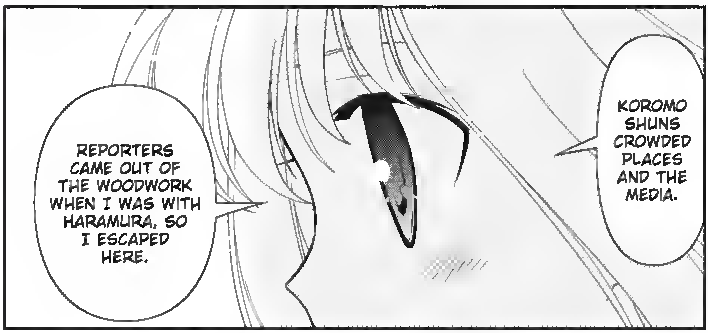
40

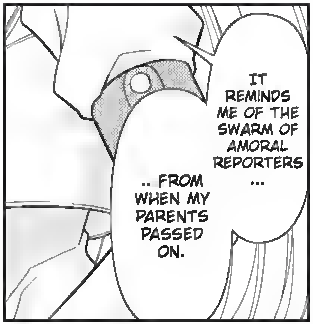
OVER THERE ...?


BEEP

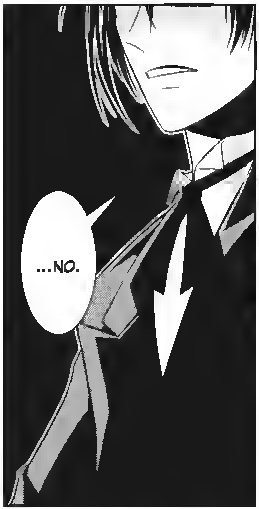
FWOOO
.....
KOROMO-SAMA!

HAGI-YOSHI!
SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU!
WHY ARE YOU IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
SECOND-YEAR, RYUMONBUCHI HIGH SCHOOL, SCHEDULED TO PLAY IN THE FINAL ROUND
KOROMO AMAE

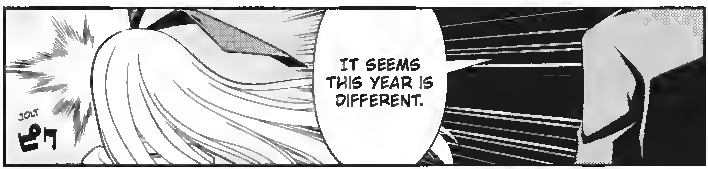

KOROMO SHUNS CROWDED PLACES AND THE MEDIA.
REPORTERS CAME OUT OF THE WOODWORK WHEN I WAS WITH HARAMURA, SO I ESCAPED HERE.

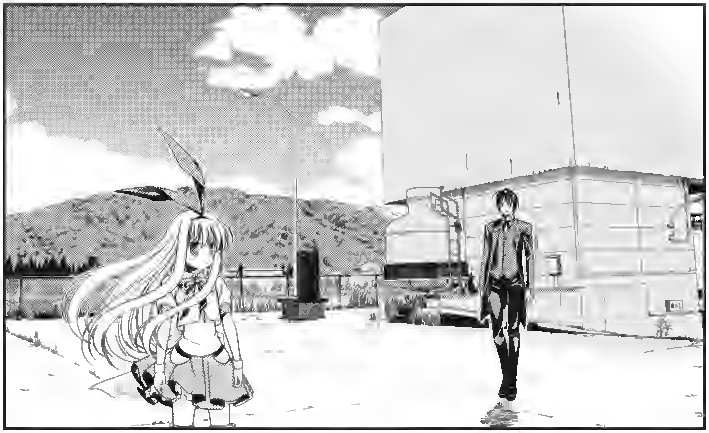

IT REMINDS ME OF THE SWARM OF AMORAL REPORTERS ...
.. FROM WHEN MY PARENTS PASSED ON.

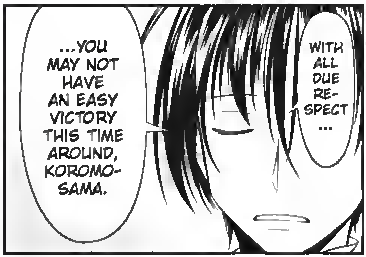
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU DO TURN DOWN ALL INTERVIEWS AND PHOTO SHOOTS.

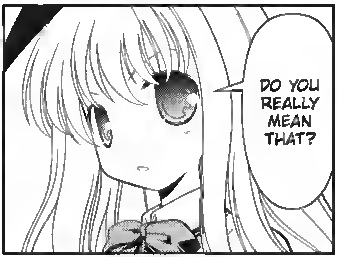

...NO.

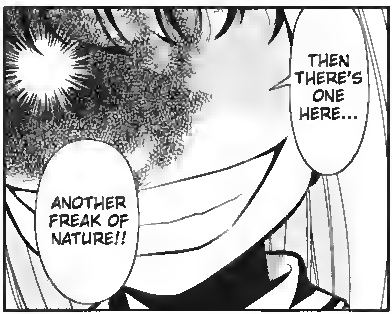
I'M SURE THE FINAL ROUND WON'T EVEN BE A DECENT TIME KILLER ANYWAY.

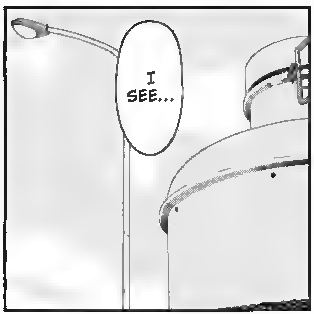

IT SEEMS THIS YEAR IS DIFFERENT.
ふつう




...YOU MAY NOT HAVE AN EASY VICTORY THIS TIME AROUND, KOROMO-SAMA.
WITH ALL DUE RE-SPECT ...


DO YOU REALLY MEAN THAT?

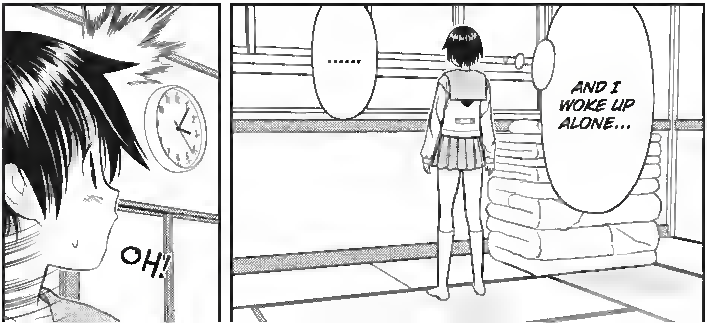

THEN THERE'S ONE HERE...
ANOTHER FREAK OF NATURE!!


I SEE...

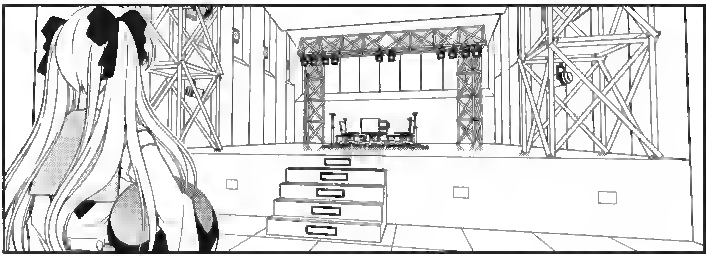
ALL RIGHT!
LET'S HEAD BACK, HAGI-YOSHI!!
YES
I'LL TOY WITH THIS PERSON, THEN DESTROY THEM!!

SHIVER

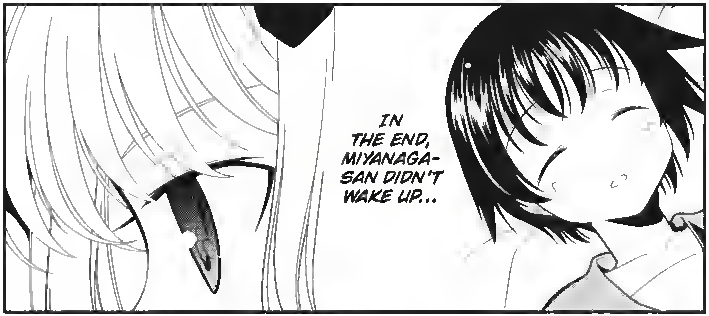
FIRST-YEAR, KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL, SCHEDULED TO PLAY IN THE FINAL ROUND
SAKI MIYANAGA
PONE
MAYBE I GOT A COLD WHEN I TOOK THAT NAP...
SHIVER


OH!
.....
AND I WOKE UP ALONE...

THE SECOND TO LAST ROUND —!!



THE LAST TIME I PLAYED IN THIS ROOM WAS DURING THE INDIVIDUAL TOURNAMENT LAST YEAR...


IN THE END, MIYANAGA-SAN DIDN'T WAKE UP...

LET'S GO TO NATIONALS TOGETHER!!

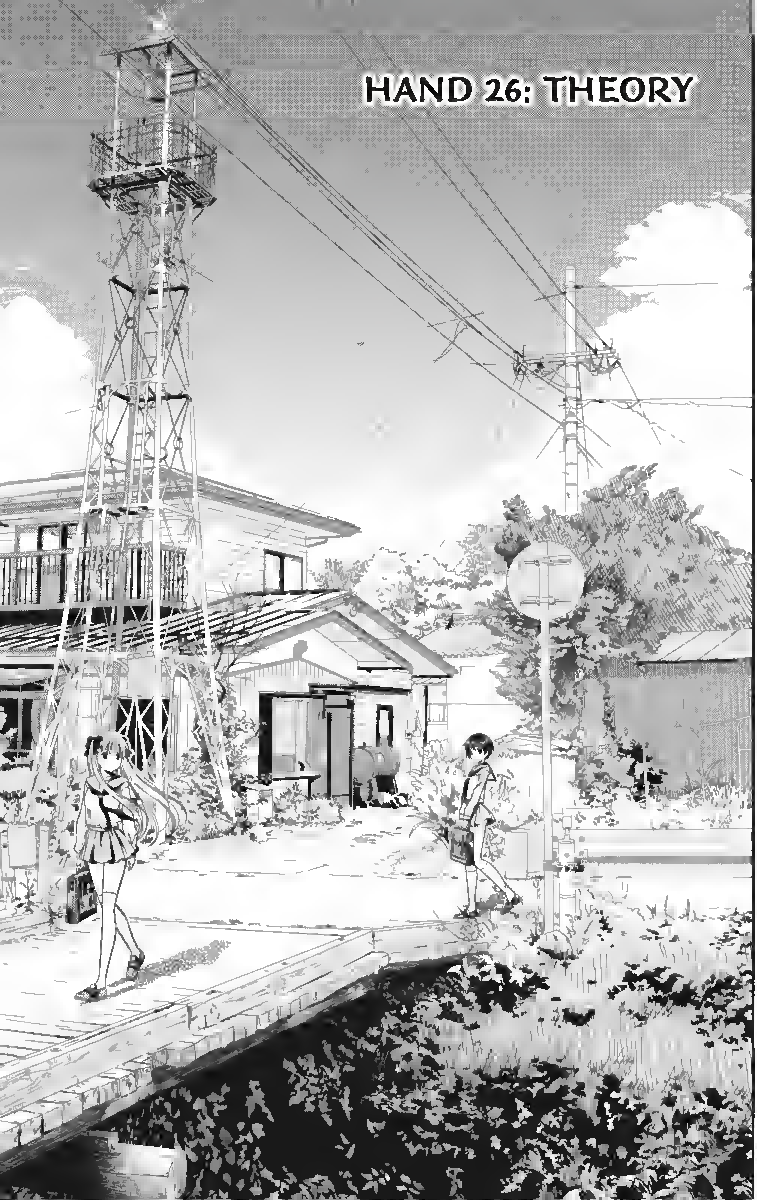
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
EVEN THOUGH WE MADE THAT PROMISE, SHE WON'T EVEN SEE ME PLAY...
HARA-MURA-SAN!!

GOOD LUCK!!
I SUPPOSE I AM...
"FIRED UP"...
MIYA-NAGA-SAN ...!?

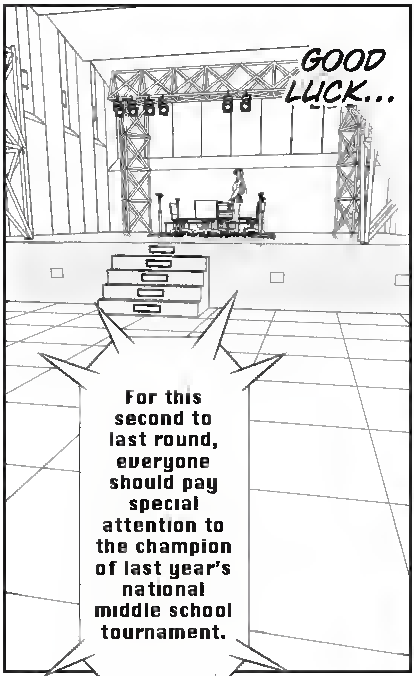
MIYA-
NAGA-
SAN
...!?

GOOD LUCK!!
"FIRED UP"...
I SUPPOSE I AM...

I'LL WIN THIS FOR SURE—!!

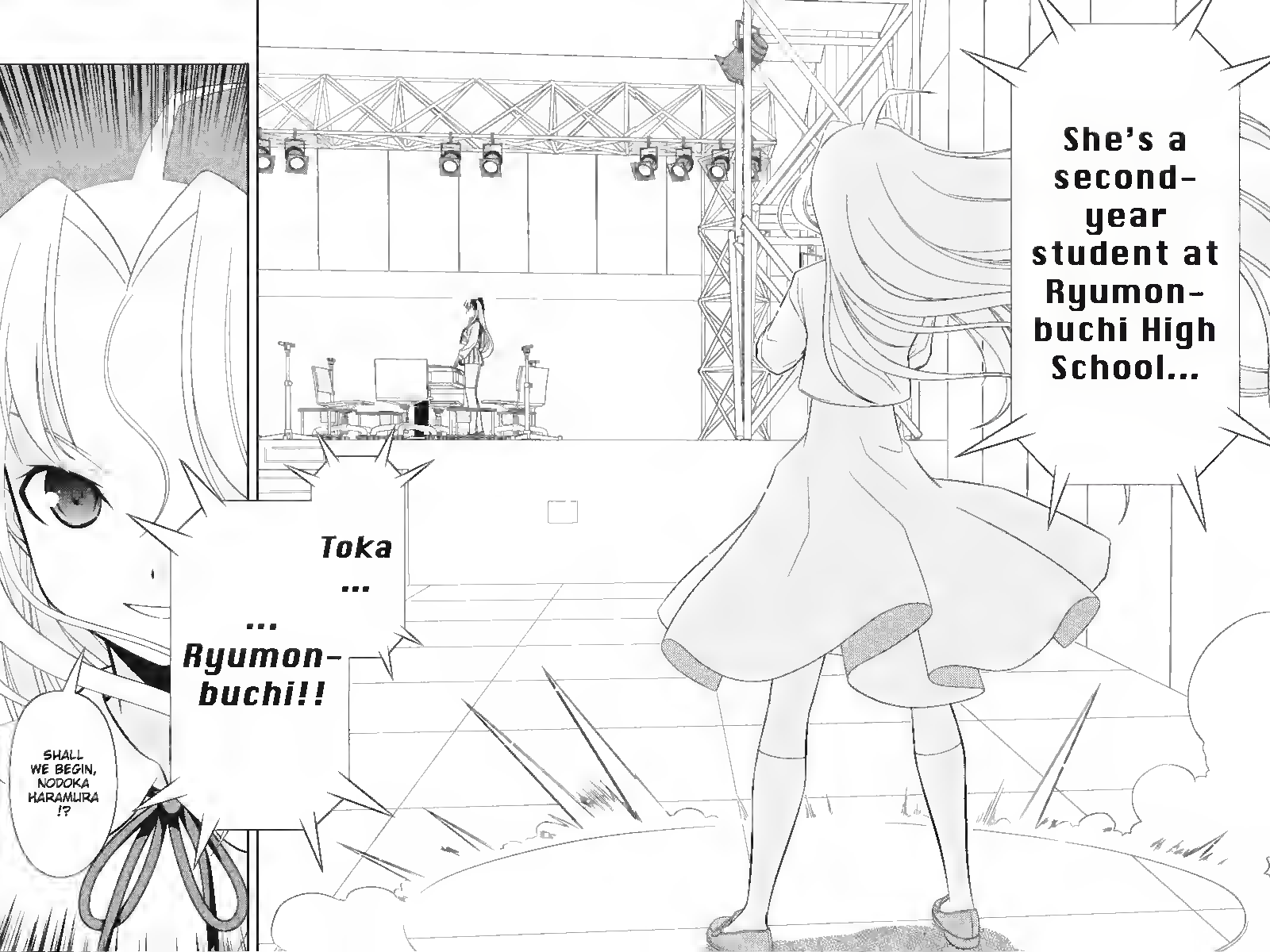

HAND 26: THEORY

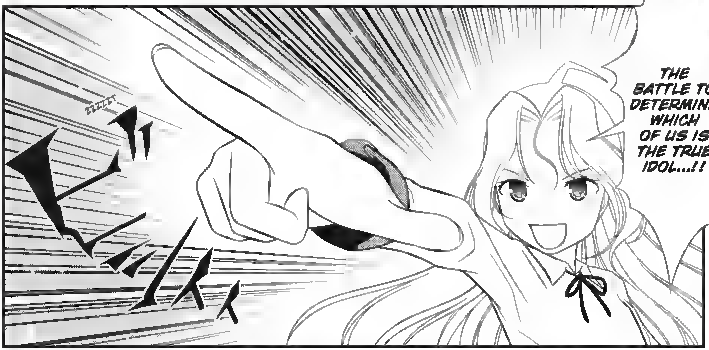
Three minutes until the beginning of the fourth round!
ONLY THE PLAYERS FOR THIS ROUND SHOULD BE IN HERE NOW.
AH.....
RIGHT.

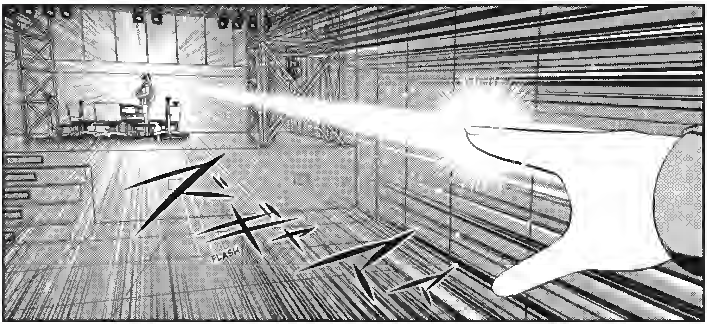

GOOD LUCK...
For this second to last round, everyone should pay special attention to the champion of last year's national middle school tournament.

.....

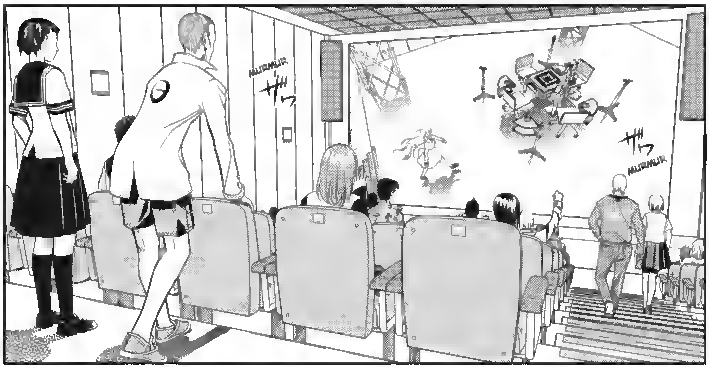
I'm talking about that first-year student at Kiyosumi High School, *Nodoka Haramura* !!
She may be the strongest freshman player in Japan right now!!
FOO
Next up...
...she showed us threatening winning percentages at last year's national tournament and is one of the best online players in the prefecture.
GASP


She's a second-year student at Ryumon-buchi High School...
Toka ...
... Ryumon-buchi!!
SHALL WE BEGIN, NODOKA HARAMURA !?

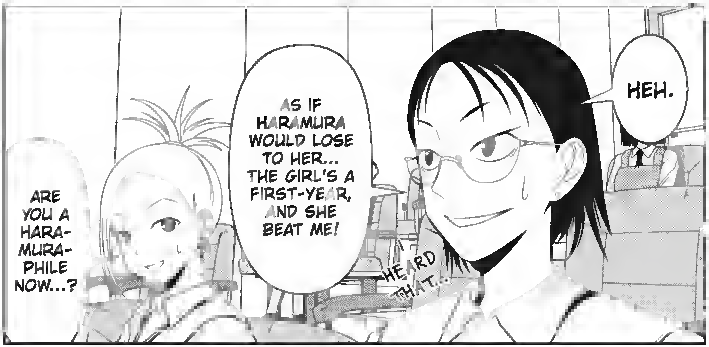

THE BATTLE TO DETERMINE WHICH OF US IS THE TRUE IDOL...!!

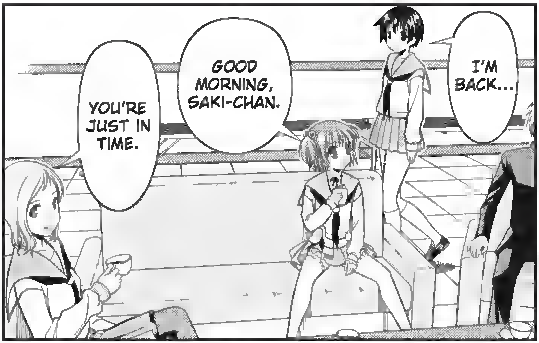

FLASH

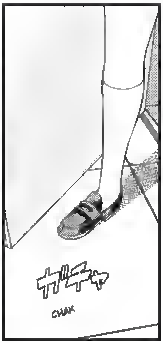
.....
BYOOM
BYOOM


MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR

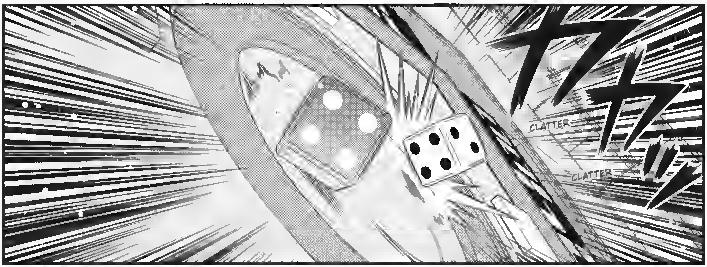
EVEN HARAMURA WON'T BE ABLE TO BEAT TOKA RYUMON-BUCHI—!
AFTER SEEING HER FAMOUS MATCH AGAINST EAST TOKYO LAST YEAR...
HM...?


HEH.
AS IF HARAMURA WOULD LOSE TO HER... THE GIRL'S A FIRST-YEAR, AND SHE BEAT ME!
I HEARD THAT...
ARE YOU A HARA-MURA-PHILE NOW...?

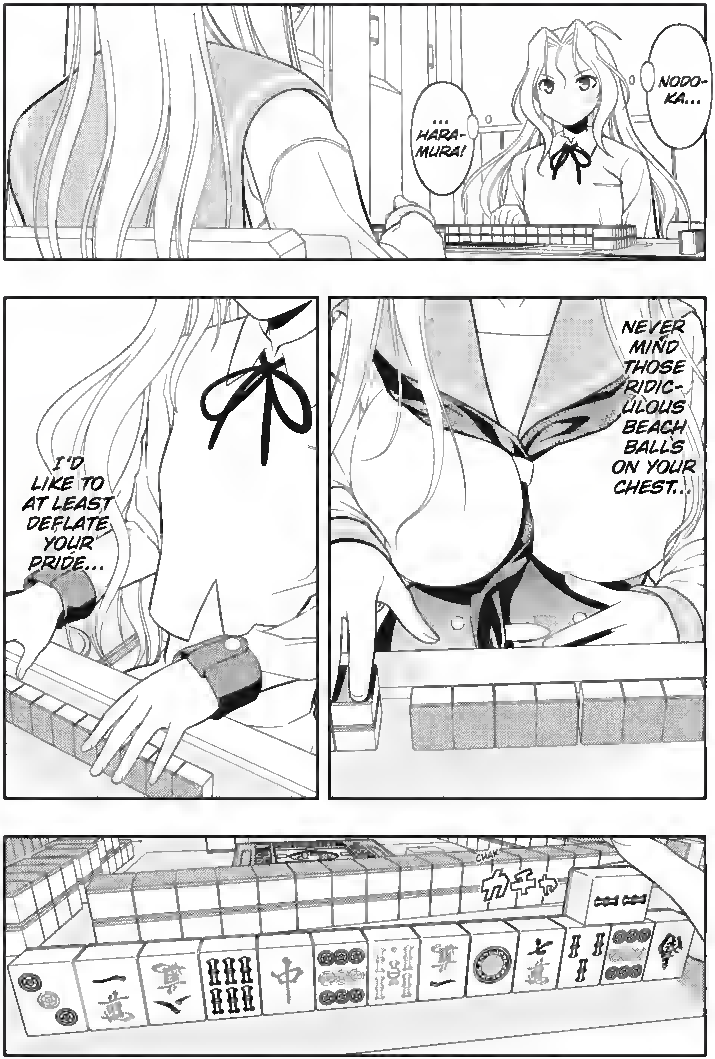

I'M BACK...
GOOD MORNING, SAKI-CHAN.
YOU'RE JUST IN TIME.

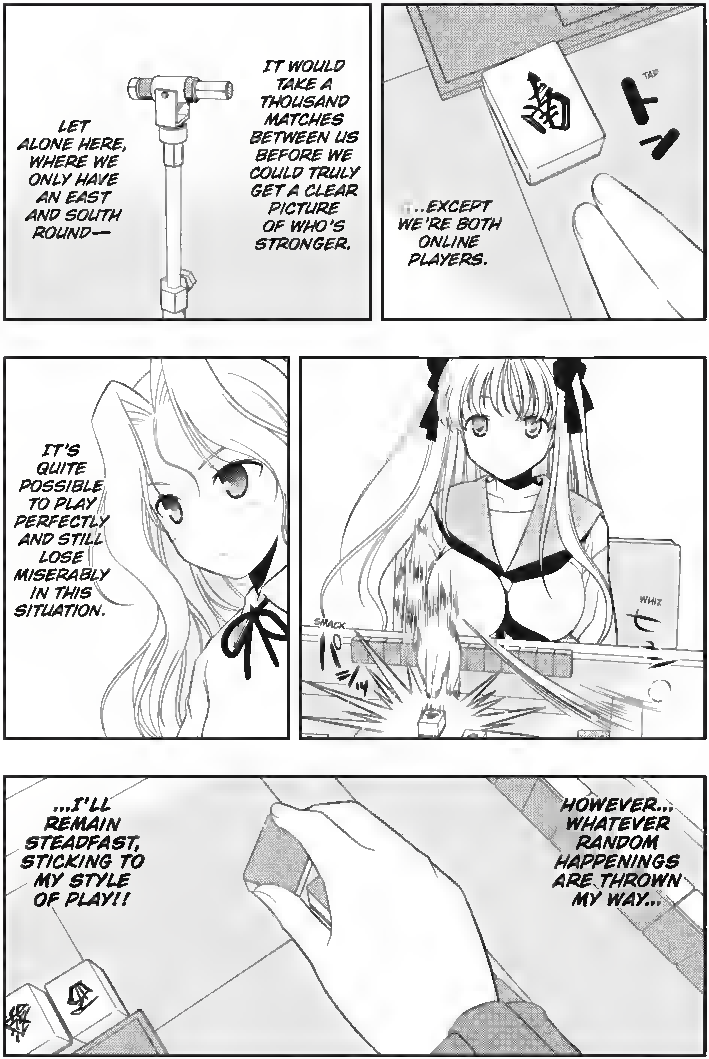

CHAK

HARA-MURA-SAN...

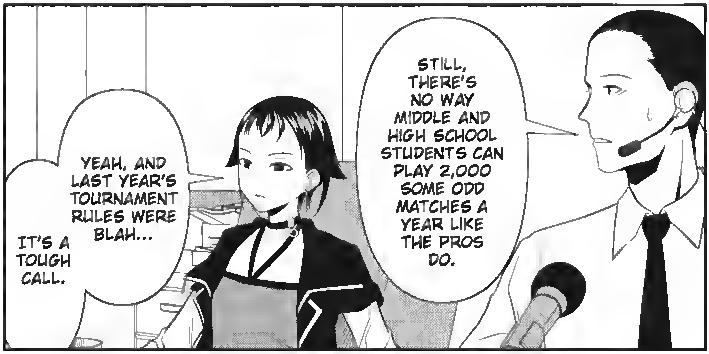

CLATTER
CLATTER

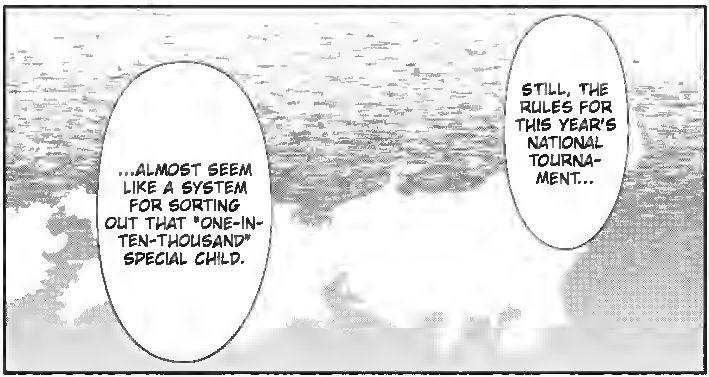
EAST PLAYER, (DEALER) SECOND-YEAR, KAZEKOSHI GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL
SUMIYO FUKABORI
91,800
SOUTH PLAYER, FIRST-YEAR, KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL
NODOKA HARAMURA
108,500
NORTH PLAYER, SECOND-YEAR, RYUMONBUCHI HIGH SCHOOL
TOKA RYUMONBUCHI
106,300
WEST PLAYER, FIRST-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY
MOMOKO TOYOKO
93,400
It's the start of the fourth round —!!!

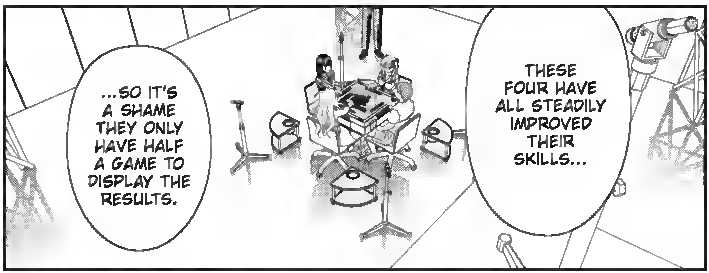

NODO-KA...
...HARA-MURA!
I'D LIKE TO AT LEAST DEFLATE YOUR PRIDE...
NEVER MIND THOSE RIDIC-ULOUS BEACH BALLS ON YOUR CHEST..
CHAK

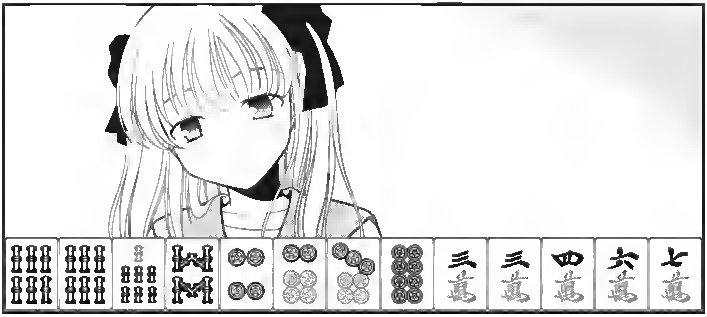

LET ALONE HERE, WHERE WE ONLY HAVE AN EAST AND SOUTH ROUND—
IT WOULD TAKE A THOUSAND MATCHES BETWEEN US BEFORE WE COULD TRULY GET A CLEAR PICTURE OF WHO'S STRONGER.
TAP
...EXCEPT WE'RE BOTH ONLINE PLAYERS.
IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE TO PLAY PERFECTLY AND STILL LOSE MISERABLY IN THIS SITUATION.
SMACK
WHIZ
...I'LL REMAIN STEADFAST, STICKING TO MY STYLE OF PLAY!!
HOWEVER... WHATEVER RANDOM HAPPENINGS ARE THROWN MY WAY...

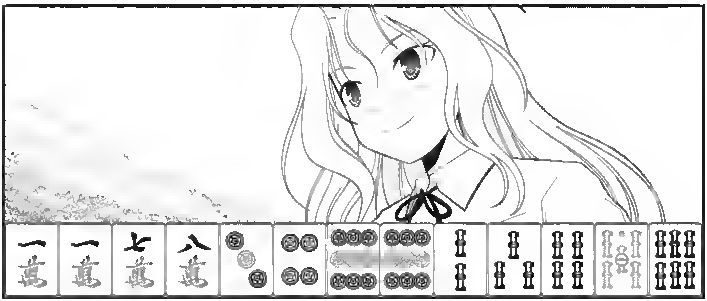
WHAT A WASTE.
Broadcasting Room
THIS MATCH.
WHAT'S A WASTE?
EX-CUSE ME?
ON TOP OF THAT, THERE ARE FEWER MATCHES OVERALL, WHICH MAKES THINGS EVEN MORE HAPHAZARD.
THIS YEAR'S RULES PUT TOO MUCH STRESS ON ELEMENTS OF LUCK, LIKE RED DORA...

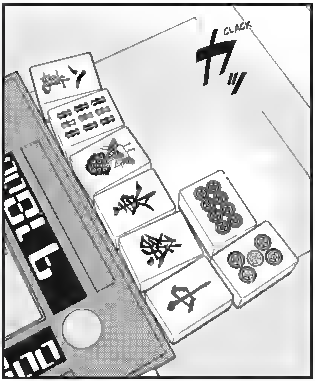

STILL, THERE'S NO WAY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN PLAY 2,000 SOME ODD MATCHES A YEAR LIKE THE PROS DO.
YEAH, AND LAST YEAR'S TOURNAMENT RULES WERE BLAH...
IT'S A TOUGH CALL.


STILL, THE RULES FOR THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL TOURNAMENT...
...ALMOST SEEM LIKE A SYSTEM FOR SORTING OUT THAT "ONE-IN-TEN-THOUSAND" SPECIAL CHILD.


THESE FOUR HAVE ALL STEADILY IMPROVED THEIR SKILLS...
...SO IT'S A SHAME THEY ONLY HAVE HALF A GAME TO DISPLAY THE RESULTS.

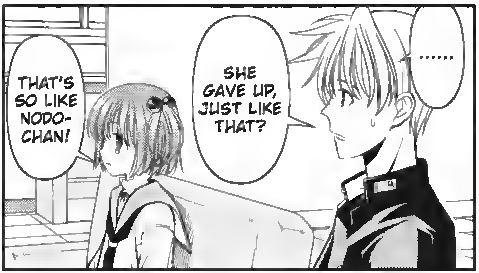


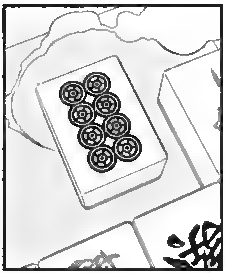



CLACK

RIICHI.

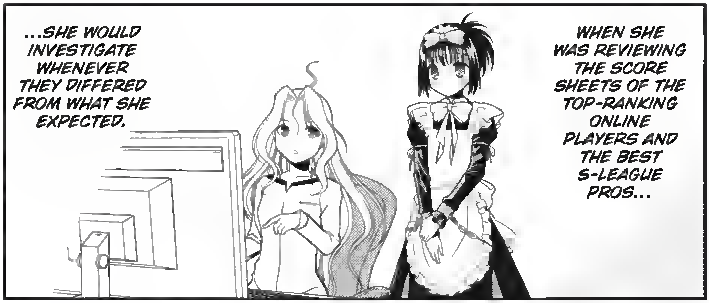
FWISH

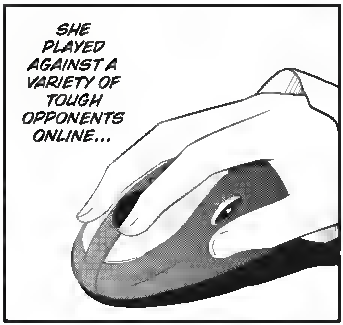

.....
SHE GAVE UP, JUST LIKE THAT?
THAT'S SO LIKE NODO-CHAN!

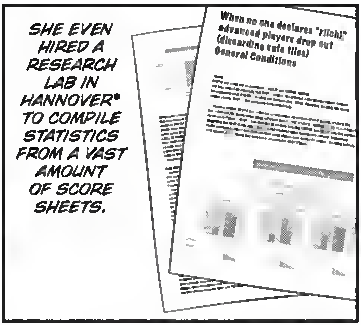


THERE AREN'T MANY SAFE TILES. SHE SHOULD REALLY TRY FOR A WINNING HAND, RIGHT?
HARA-MURA IS A TOTAL CHICKEN.
YEAH, RIGHT. WHEN SHE'S THREE TILES AWAY FROM COMPLETING A HAND AND THE DEALER IS JUST ONE TILE AWAY!

トン
.....
チャ
SHE FOLD-ED?
I WOULD'VE STUCK WITH IT.
IT'S OKAY. TOKA WON'T LOSE.
AFTER ALL...
...SHE'S FAR BETTER THAN EVEN LAST YEAR!

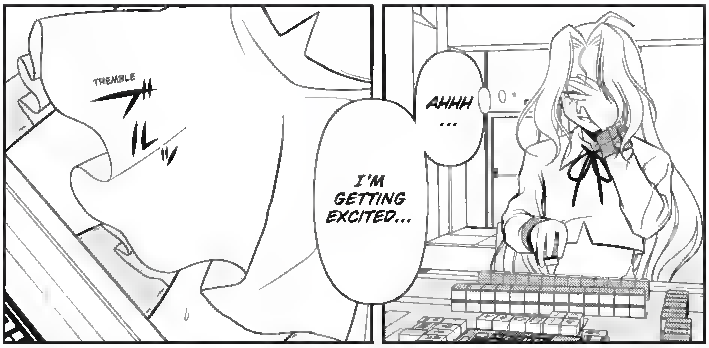

...SHE WOULD INVESTIGATE WHENEVER THEY DIFFERED FROM WHAT SHE EXPECTED.
WHEN SHE WAS REVIEWING THE SCORE SHEETS OF THE TOP-RANKING ONLINE PLAYERS AND THE BEST S-LEAGUE PROS...




SHE EVEN HIRED A RESEARCH LAB IN HANNOVER* TO COMPILE STATISTICS FROM A VAST AMOUNT OF SCORE SHEETS.
When no one declares "Pitch!" advanced players drop out (discarding safe tiles)
General Conditions

*A MAJOR CENTER IN NORTHERN GERMANY KNOWN FOR ITS DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITIES

...IS SPREADING HER WINGS RIGHT IN FRONT OF TOKA'S EYES!!!

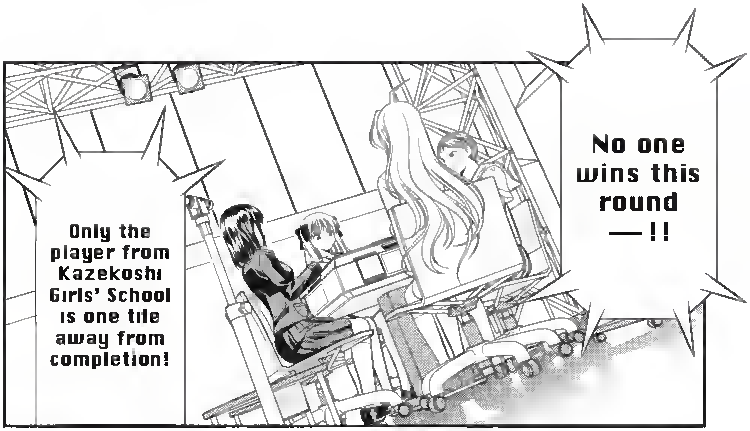

TREMBLE
I'M GETTING EXCITED...
AHHH...

...TO BRING YOU DOWN TO EARTH...!!
WHEN I THINK THAT I MIGHT BE THE FIRST PERSON...

HAND 27: INCOMPLETE

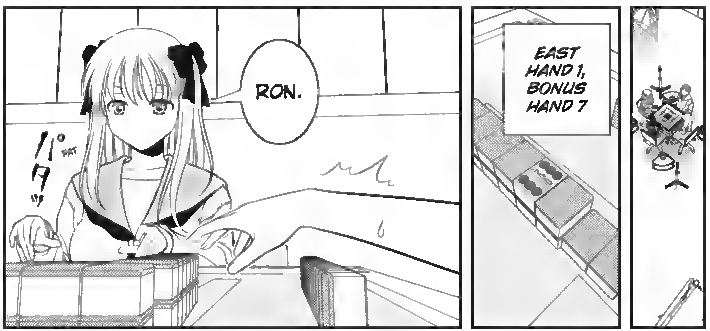
CERTAINLY ...
...SHE DOES HAVE THAT SIDE TO HER.
USUALLY TOKA IS LIKE AN ABSENT-MINDED PRINCESS...
パラ RUSTLE
モグ CHEW
...BUH IF HER .. OPPO-NEN'S...
DON'T TALK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL.
BUT IT'S TRUE.
THE STRONGER HER OPPONENT, THE MORE TOKA GETS FIRED UP.
BUT WHEN SHE GETS REALLY, REALLY FIRED UP, ANOTHER TOKA EMERGES.

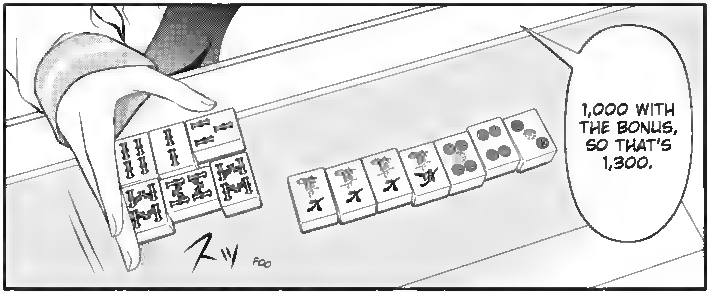
ONE WHO IS COLD AS ICE—
ONE SHE NORMALLY WOULDN'T EVEN LET US CATCH A GLIMPSE OF—
TOKA WOULD NEVER HAVE A BOY-FRIEND!
HUH ...?
I BET A MAN WILL BE ABLE TO MELT THROUGH THAT ICE SOMEDAY!

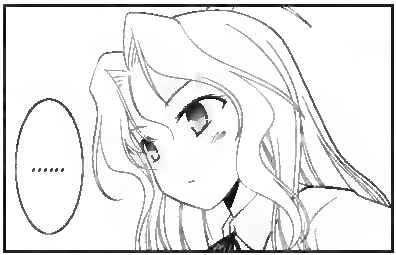


IT MUST BE NECESSARY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS WHEN YOU'RE GOING WITH DAMATEN.
TSURUGA HASN'T DECLARED A FORMAL TENPAI AND HAS FOLDED.
STILL, PLAYING IT SAFE, AREN'T THEY?

FORMAL TENPAI (KEISHIKI TENPAI OR MEITEN): SITUATION IN WHICH THE PLAYER HAS TENPAI ("READY," MEETING ONE MORE TILE FOR COMPLETION) BUT NO YAKU
DAMATEN: WHEN THE PLAYER HAS A CLOSED HAND AND IS ONE TILE AWAY FROM COMPLETION BUT DOESN'T CALL RICHI




1,000 WITH THE BONUS, SO THAT'S 1,300.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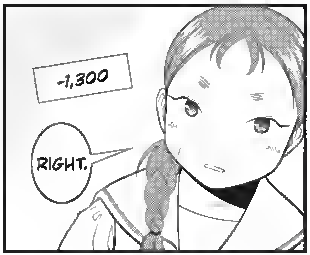
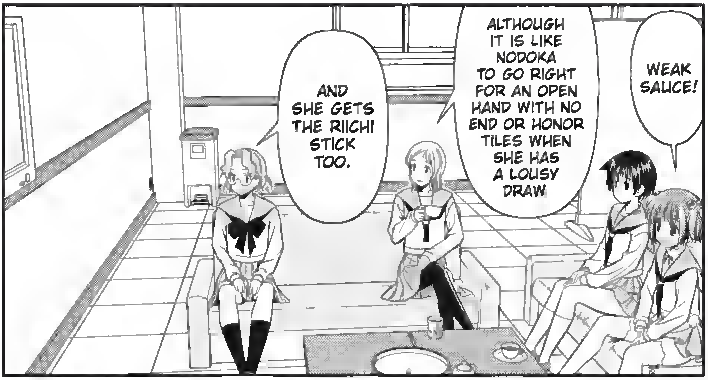
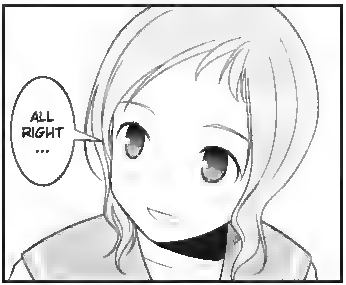
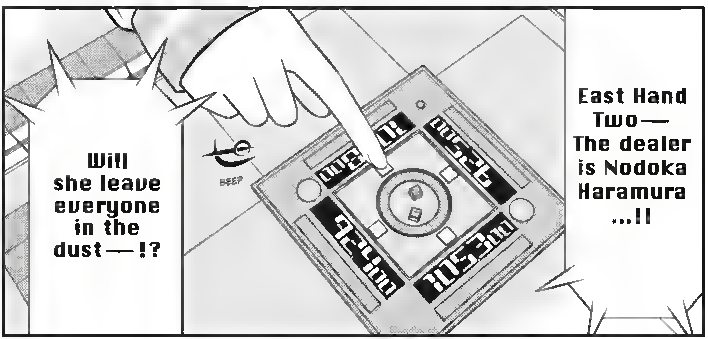

-1,300
RIGHT.

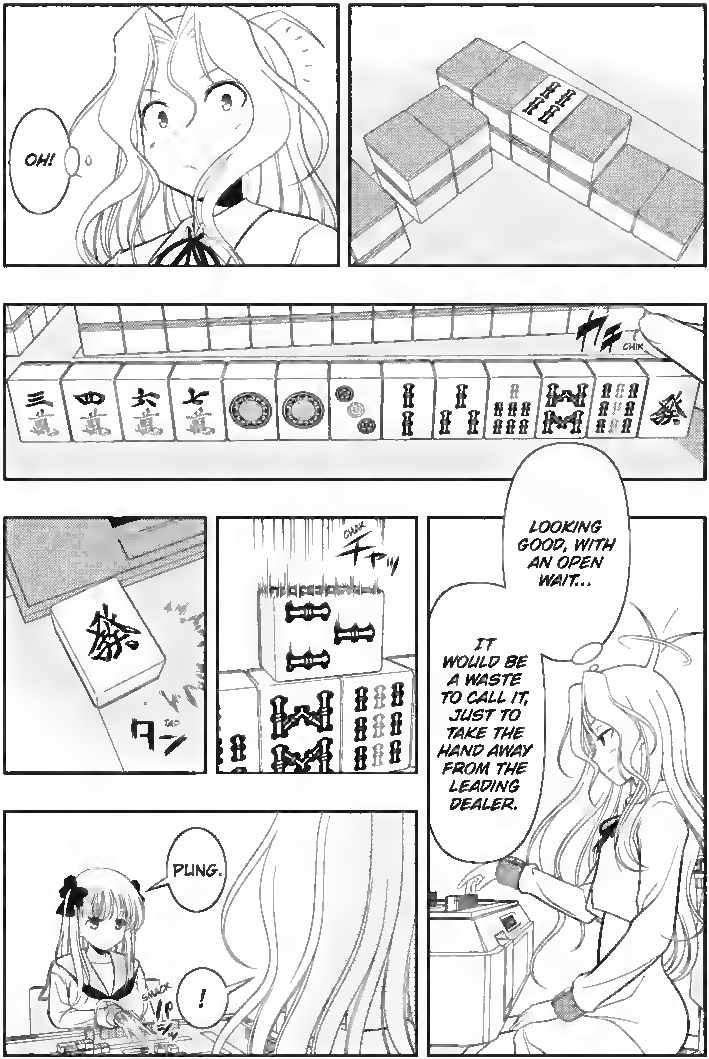
+1,300
That being said, it was a simple hand!
Kiyosumi High School's Nodoka Haramura has won the first hand of this fourth round!!


WEAK SAUCE!
ALTHOUGH IT IS LIKE NODOKA TO GO RIGHT FOR AN OPEN HAND WITH NO END OR HONOR TILES WHEN SHE HAS A LOUSY DRAW.
AND SHE GETS THE RIICHI STICK TOO.

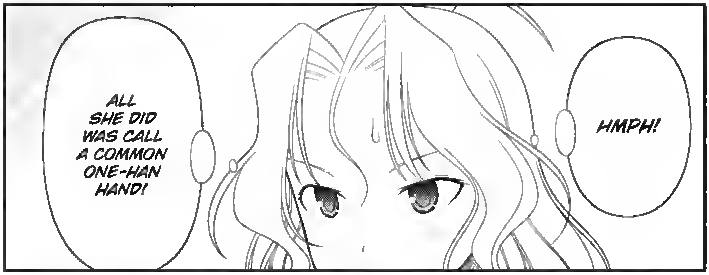
AN OPEN ALL SIMPLE (TUITAN) IS AN ALL SIMPLE THAT IS ACHIEVED BY CALLING FOR TILES. IN SOME RULES, THIS HAND IS NOT ALLOWED. THE PLAYER WHO WINS DURING A TURN CAN COLLECT A 1,000-POINT RIICHI STICK.

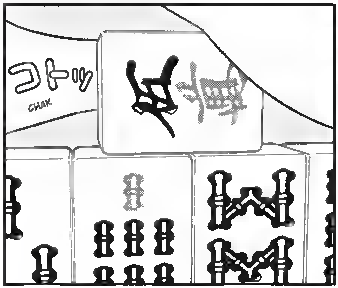


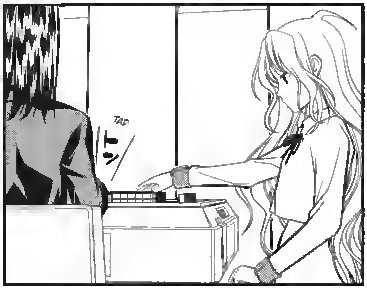


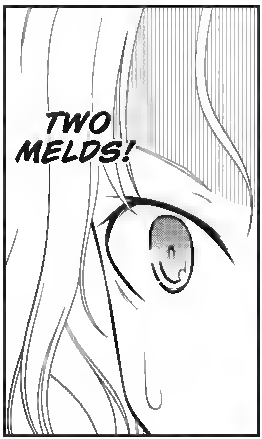

OH!
CHIK
LOOKING GOOD, WITH AN OPEN WAIT...
IT WOULD BE A WASTE TO CALL IT, JUST TO TAKE THE HAND AWAY FROM THE LEADING DEALER.
PUNG.
!

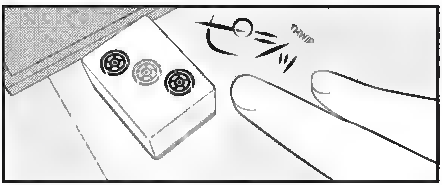
Taking the fast track —!!
CLACK

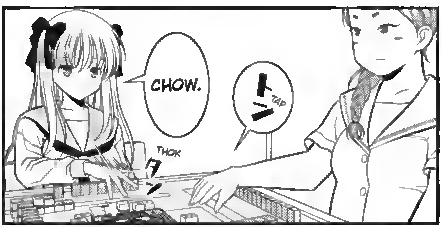












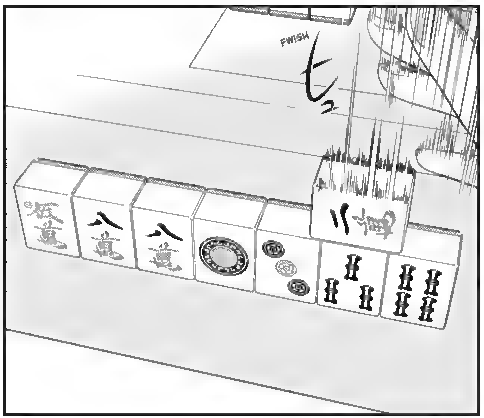
MELD: CALLING TO COMPLETE A CHOW, PUNG, OR KONG. IN THIS CASE, TWO MELDS ARE BEING CALLED.

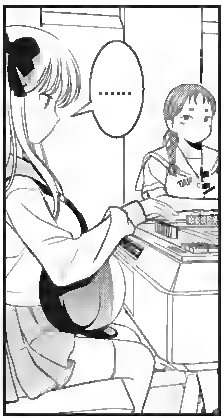
ALTHOUGH I'M JUST TWO TILES AWAY FROM COMPLETION TOO...
IT'S EARLY ON, AND NO ONE KNOWS THE POINTS YET, SO AGAINST AN OPPONENT WHO MADE TWO CALLS, I'M STILL GOING ON THE ATTACK!!
CLICK
WELCOME TO MY PARLOR!!

RIICHI!!

Toka Ryumon-buchi from Ryumon-buchi High School with a preemptive riichi — !!

How will the other players react to this riichi!?


FWISH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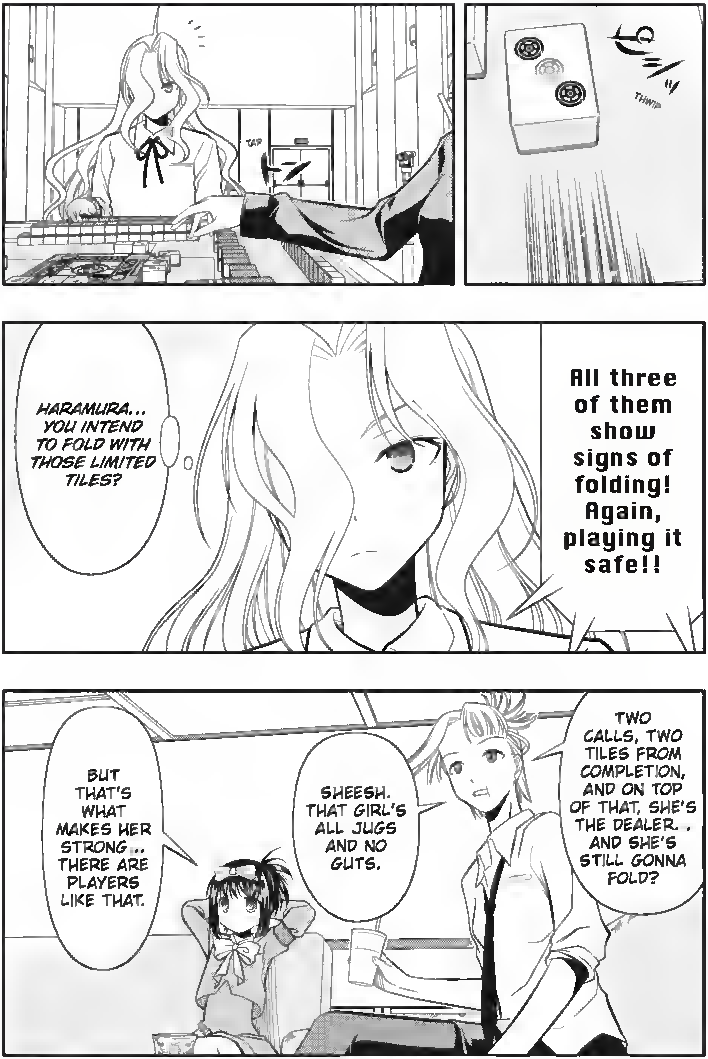
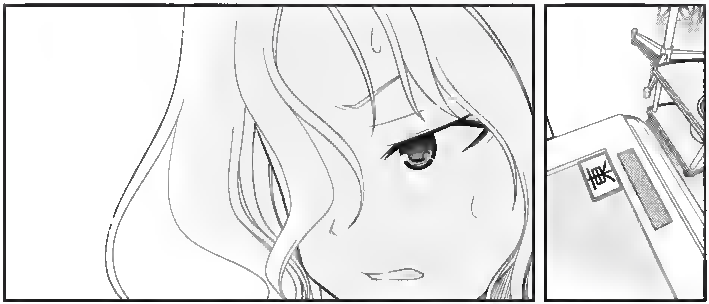
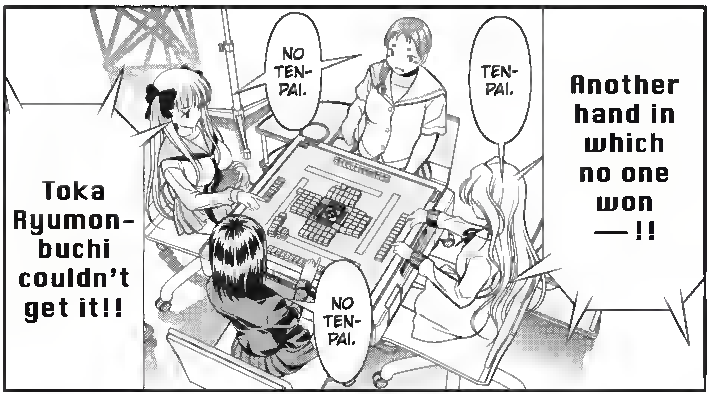
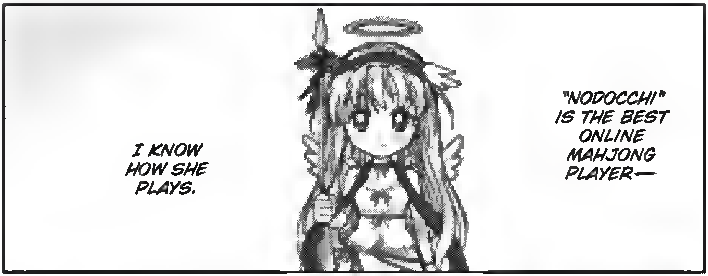
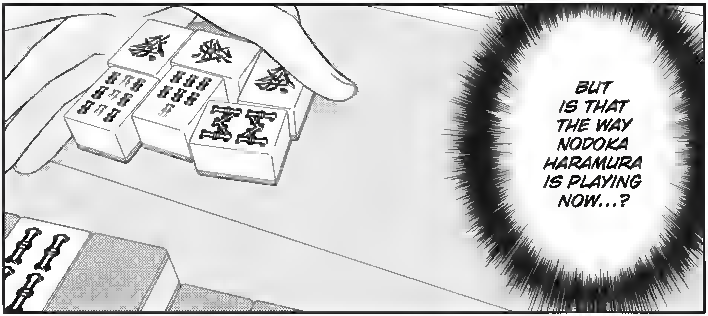

TAP
THWP
HARAMURA... YOU INTEND TO FOLD WITH THOSE LIMITED TILES?
All three of them show signs of folding! Again, playing it safe!!
BUT THAT'S WHAT MAKES HER STRONG... THERE ARE PLAYERS LIKE THAT.
SHEESH. THAT GIRL'S ALL JUGS AND NO GUTS.
TWO CALLS, TWO TILES FROM COMPLETION, AND ON TOP OF THAT, SHE'S THE DEALER... AND SHE'S STILL GONNA FOLD?

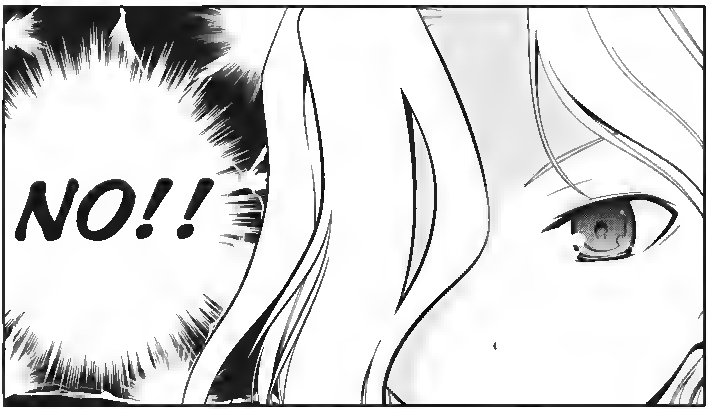

SIGN: EAST

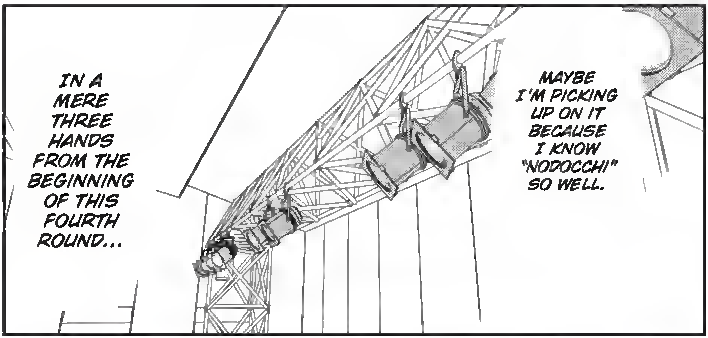

NO TEN-PAI.
TEN-PAI.
NO TEN-PAI.
Another hand in which no one won —!!
Toka Ryumon-buchi couldn't get it!!

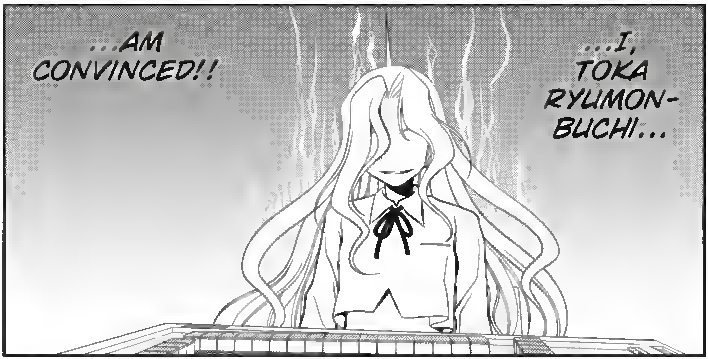
I HAVE ...
...THE FAINTEST FEELING THAT SOMETHING IS OFF!!
RATTLE
WHAT IS THIS...?


"NODOCCHI" IS THE BEST ONLINE MAHJONG PLAYER—
I KNOW HOW SHE PLAYS.


BUT IS THAT THE WAY NODOKA HARAMURA IS PLAYING NOW...?


NO!!


IN A MERE THREE HANDS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THIS FOURTH ROUND...
MAYBE I'M PICKING UP ON IT BECAUSE I KNOW "NODOCCHI" SO WELL.


...AM CONVINCED!!
...I, TOKA RYUMON-BUCHI...

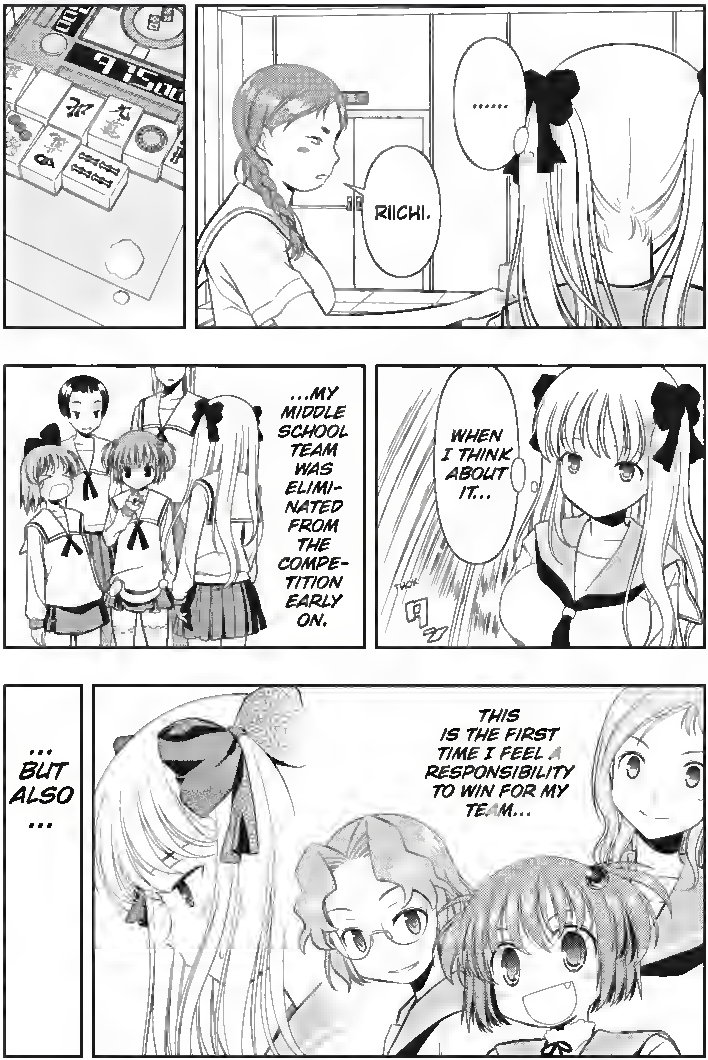
NODOKA HARAMURA ISN'T AT 100% YET—!

SHE HASN'T COMPLETED THE TRANS-FORMATION INTO "NODOCCHI" YET—!!

I CAN UNDER-STAND THE AESTHETIC SENSE OF THE BAD GUY WAITING FOR THE HERO TO TRANS-FORM...
...BUT I'M NOT A PATIENT PERSON.
HURRY UP AND UNLEASH YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL—
OTHER-WISE...
...I'LL CRUSH YOU!!

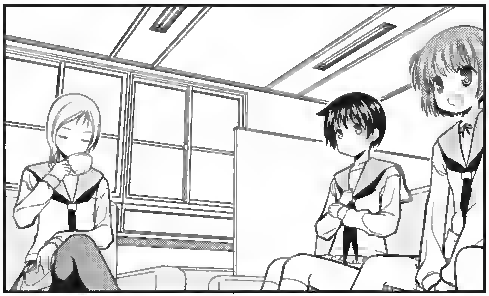
HAND 28: ABNORMALITY

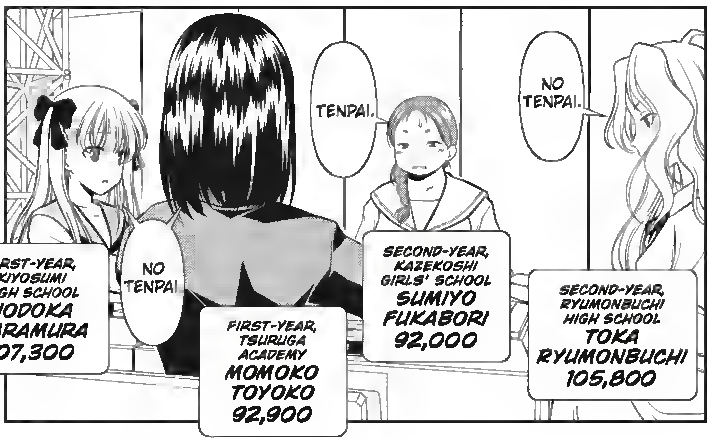
EAST HAND 3, BONUS HAND 1
RATTLE
カラ
RATTLE
カラ
IT'S STRANGE ...
I'M SO NERVOUS ...

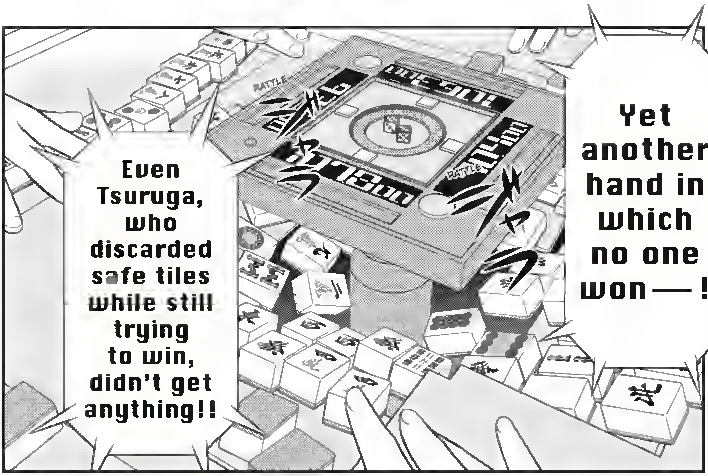

RIICHI.
.....
...MY MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAM WAS ELIMI-NATED FROM THE COMPE-TITION EARLY ON.
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT...
...BUT ALSO ...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY TO WIN FOR MY TEAM...

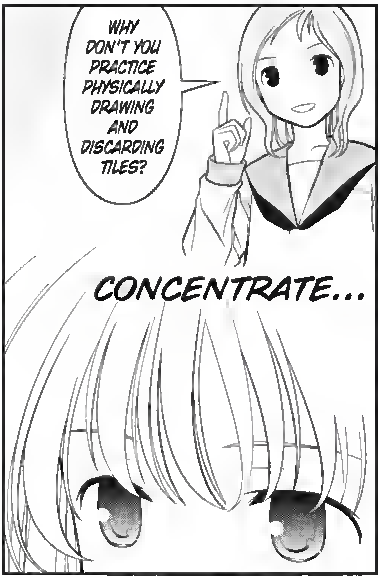
...BECAUSE MIYANAGA-SAN IS WATCHING!
SO I HAVE TO...

...KEEP MY HEAD IN THE GAME!
ピシッ



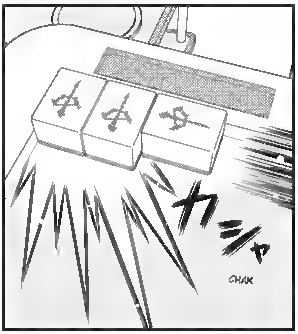

NO TENPAI.
TENPAI.
NO TENPAI
FIRST-YEAR, KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL
NODOKA HARAMURA
107,300
FIRST-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY
MOMOKO TOYOKO
92,900
SECOND-YEAR, KAZEKOSHI GIRLS' SCHOOL
SUMIYO FUKABORI
92,000
SECOND-YEAR, RYUMONBUCHI HIGH SCHOOL
TOKA RYUMONBUCHI
105,800


Even Tsuruga, who discarded safe tiles while still trying to win, didn't get anything!!
Yet another hand in which no one won—!


WHY DON'T YOU PRACTICE PHYSICALLY DRAWING AND DISCARDING TILES?
CONCENTRATE...

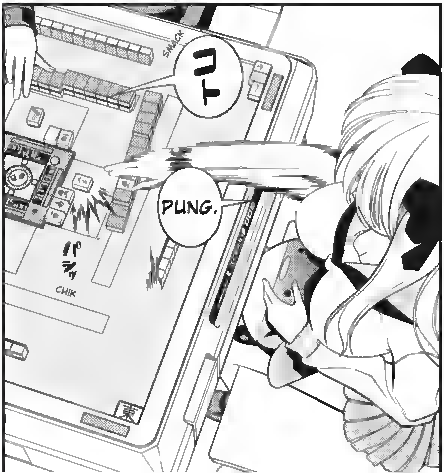
EAST HAND 4, BONUS HAND 2

.....
THOK

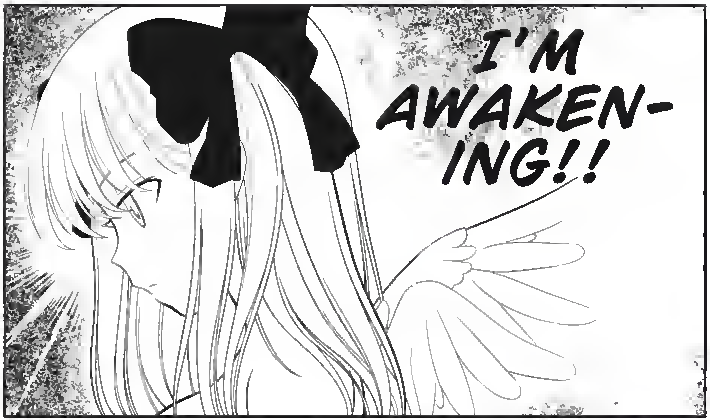

CHAK

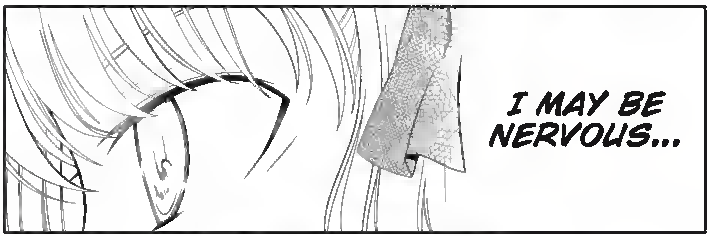
FWISH
PUNG.
TAP

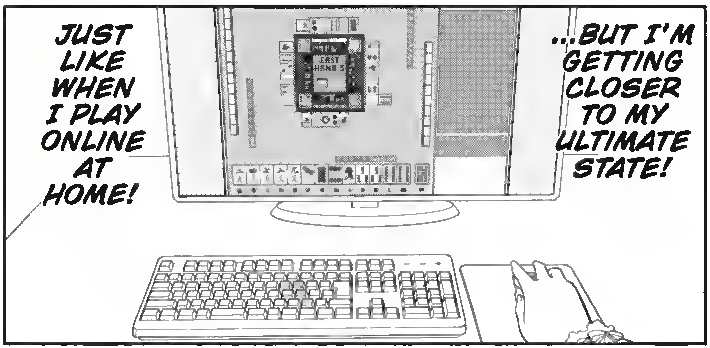
JUST LIKE ALWAYS...
SQUEEZE
PLAY WHILE YOU'RE HUGGING THE PENGUIN, NODOKA.


SNUCK
PUNG.
CHIK

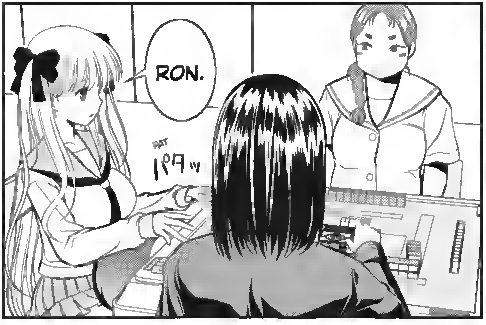
IS THIS WHY...?

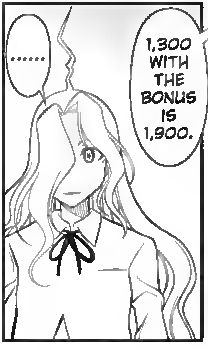

I'M AWAKEN-ING!!

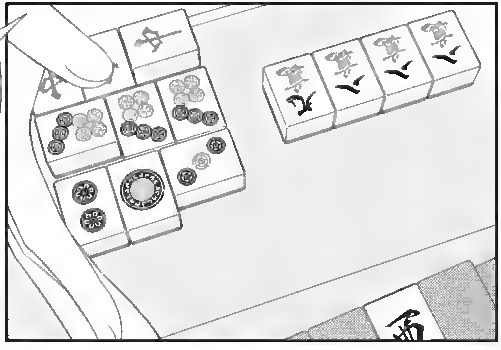

I MAY BE NERVOUS...


JUST LIKE WHEN I PLAY ONLINE AT HOME!
...BUT I'M GETTING CLOSER TO MY ULTIMATE STATE!

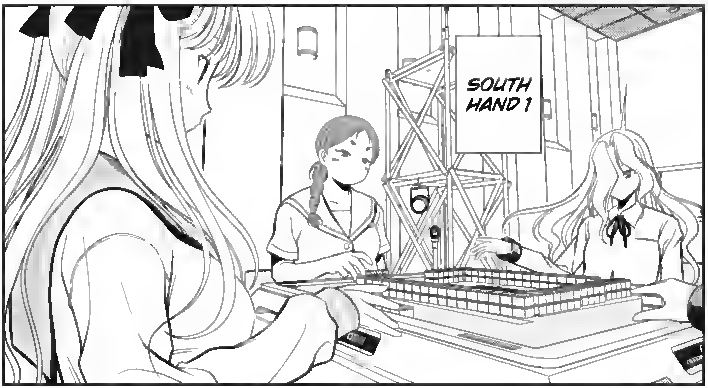
SIGN WEST

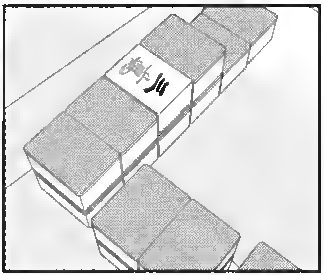


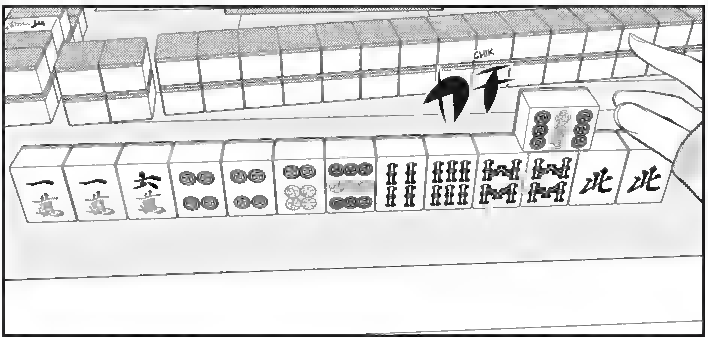




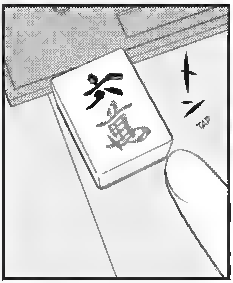
HARA-MURA—!
ゾクッ
ARE YOU ALMOST THERE?
ARE YOU WAK-ING UP!?

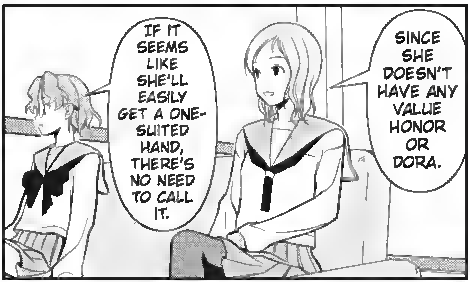

SOUTH
HAND 1

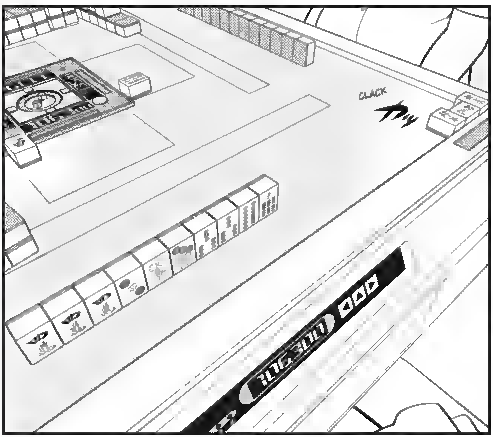


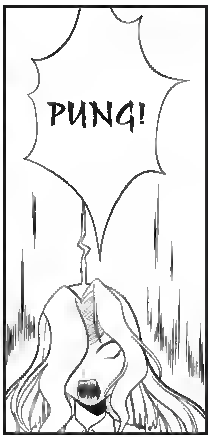


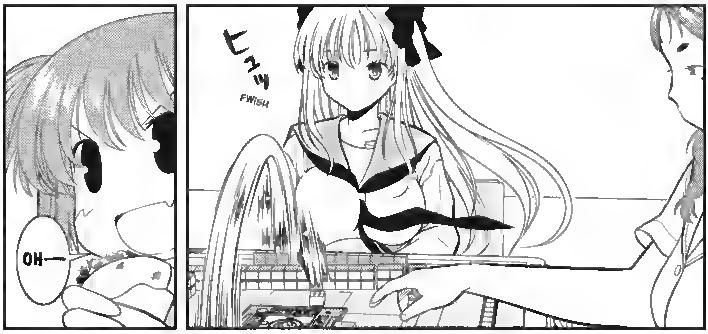
SHE HAS FIVE PAIRS.
MAYBE SHE SHOULD CALL ALL PUNGS?
FIVE PAIRS IS TWO TILES AWAY FROM A SEVEN PAIRS.
WITHOUT A CONCEALED PUNG IN HER HAND, SHE'S BETTER OFF GOING FOR A SEVEN PAIRS THAN ALL PUNGS.

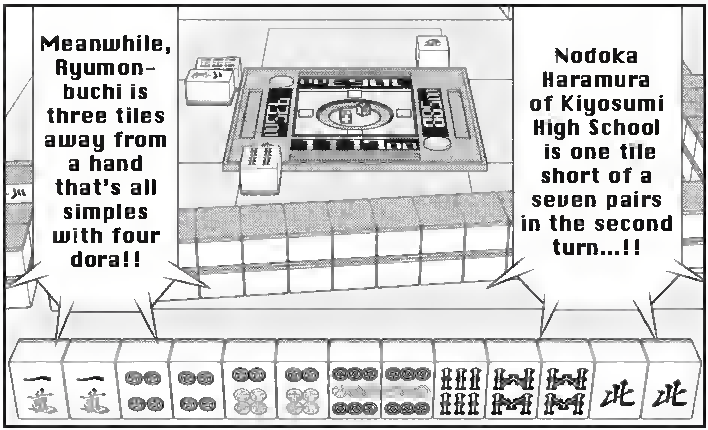

TAP

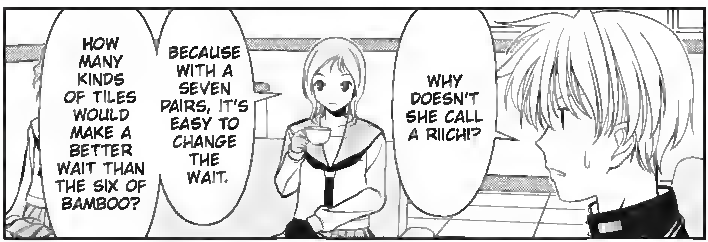

SINCE SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY VALUE HONOR OR DORA.
IF IT SEEMS LIKE SHE'LL EASILY GET A ONE-SUITED HAND, THERE'S NO NEED TO CALL IT.

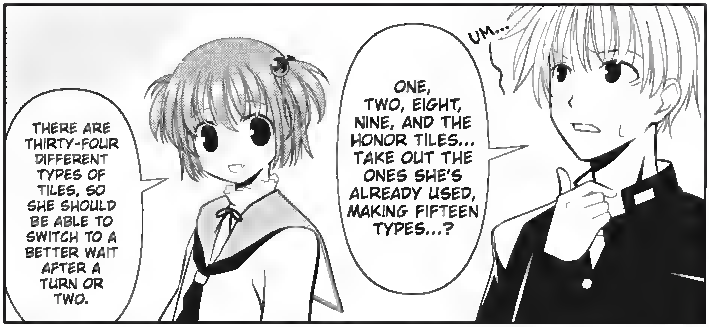

CLACK

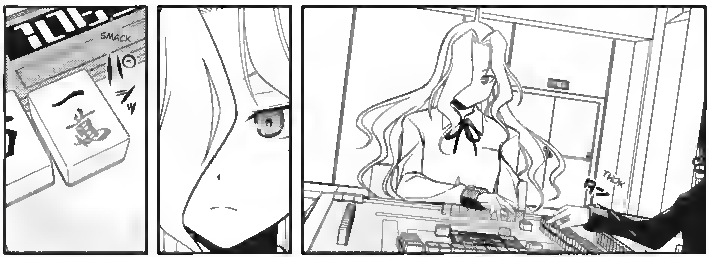

PUNG!

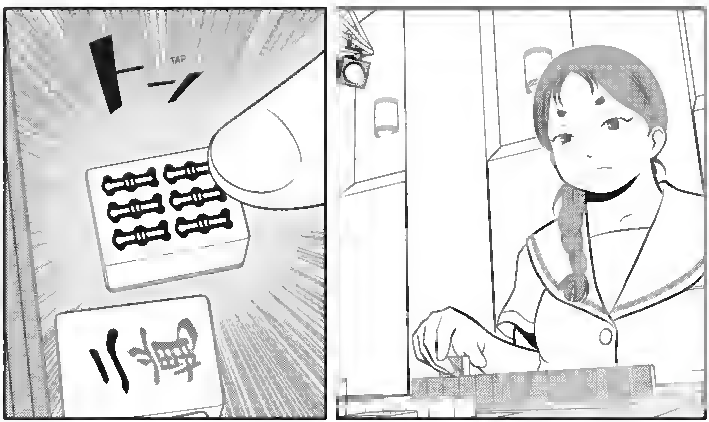

OH—
FWISH

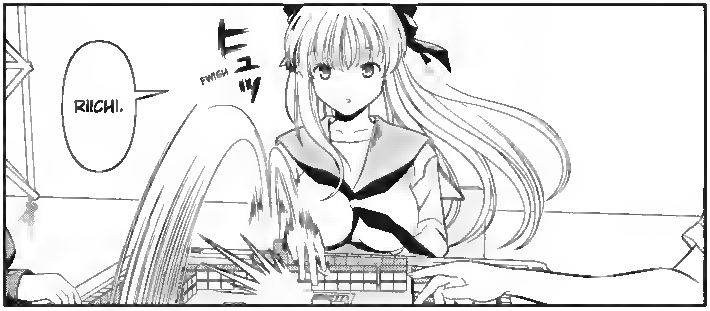

Meanwhile, Ryumon-buchi is three tiles away from a hand that's all simples with four dora!!
Nodoka Haramura of Kiyosumi High School is one tile short of a seven pairs in the second turn...!!


HOW MANY KINDS OF TILES WOULD MAKE A BETTER WAIT THAN THE SIX OF BAMBOO?
BECAUSE WITH A SEVEN PAIRS, IT'S EASY TO CHANGE THE WAIT.
WHY DOESN'T SHE CALL A RIICHI?


UM...
ONE, TWO, EIGHT, NINE, AND THE HONOR TILES... TAKE OUT THE ONES SHE'S ALREADY USED, MAKING FIFTEEN TYPES...?
THERE ARE THIRTY-FOUR DIFFERENT TYPES OF TILES, SO SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SWITCH TO A BETTER WAIT AFTER A TURN OR TWO.


SMACK
TICK


TAP


RIICHI.
FWISH

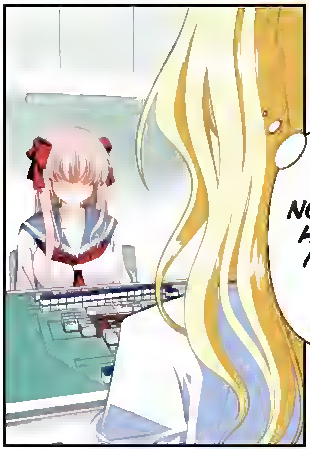
Nodoka Haramura of Kiyosumi High School... has passed up the discarded six of bamboo from Fukabori of Kazekoshi Girls' High School...
HUH ...?
...and called a riichi on the west wind she drew from the wall!!

...so there are two left!
One of the west winds has already been discarded ...
Aaah ~ !!
RYUMONBUCHI HAS JUST DRAWN ONE OF THEM...!
WORST-CASE SCENARIO.
NO CHOICE BUT TO FOLD.

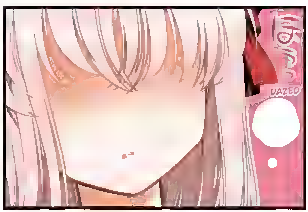
Are we going to have yet another hand where nobody wins —!?
She folded —
SOUTH
30600
I WONDER WHY SHE DIDN'T TAKE THE HAND FROM THE SIX OF BAMBOO.
IT ONLY WOULD'VE BEEN 1,600 POINTS.
SHE'S IN THE LEAD, AND IT WOULD'VE BEEN OKAY...
NINE TURNS LATER —
FWISH
...BUT IF SHE WENT OUT WITH A TSUMO AND GOT THE UNDER-NEATH DORA, IT'D BE 12,000 POINTS
THAT'S A BIG IF ...
SMACK

TSU-
MO.
BOOM

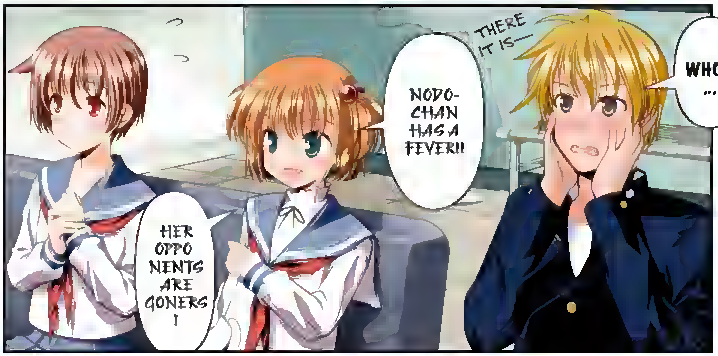
SHE'S NOT TAKING IT!?
UNDER……
GASP
PHEW…
THAT'LL BE 1,600/3,200.
HARA-MURA —!?

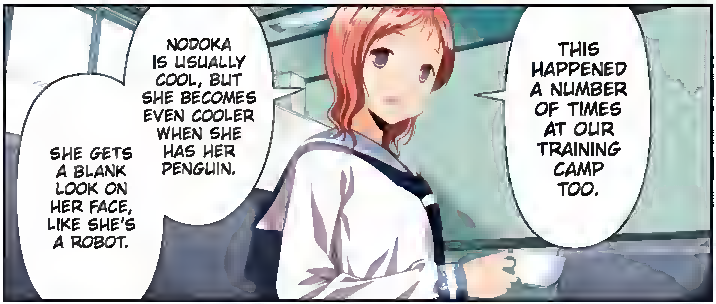


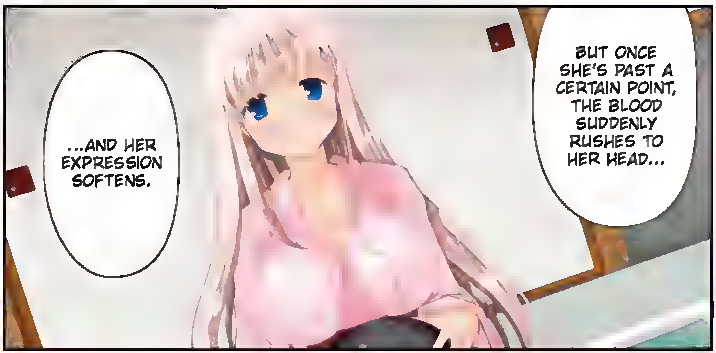
.....?
NODOKA HARA-MURA —!?

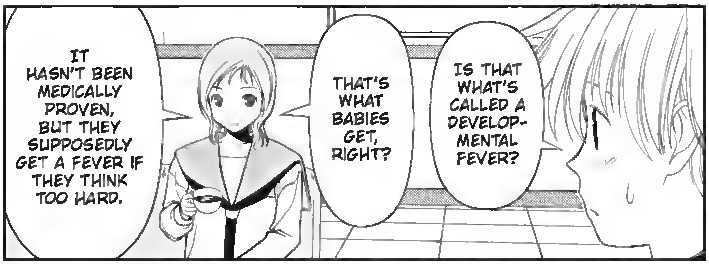


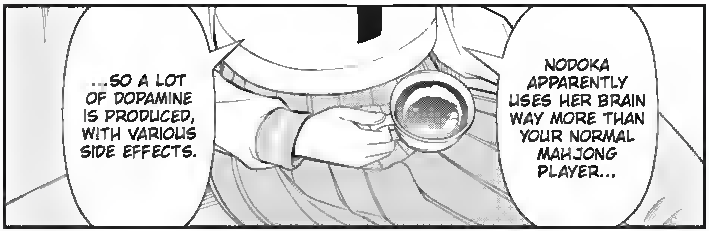
HAND 29: A DIFFERENT PERSON

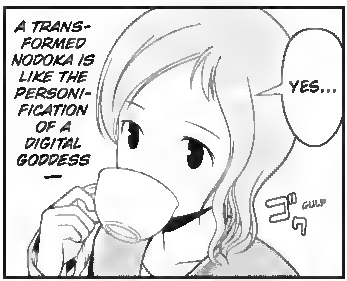

WHOA...
THERE IT IS—
NODO-CHAN HAS A FEVER!!
HER OPPONENTS ARE GONERS!

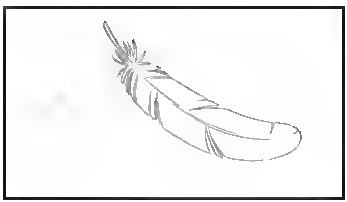

THIS HAPPENED A NUMBER OF TIMES AT OUR TRAINING CAMP TOO.
NODOKA IS USUALLY COOL, BUT SHE BECOMES EVEN COOLER WHEN SHE HAS HER PENGUIN.
SHE GETS A BLANK LOOK ON HER FACE, LIKE SHE'S A ROBOT.


BUT ONCE SHE'S PAST A CERTAIN POINT, THE BLOOD SUDDENLY RUSHES TO HER HEAD...
...AND HER EXPRESSION SOFTENS.

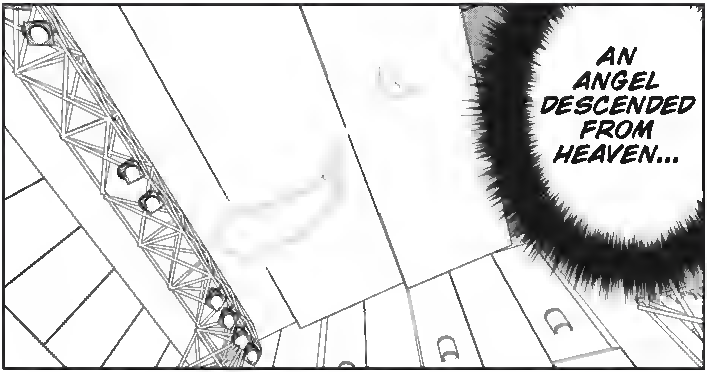

IS THAT WHAT'S CALLED A DEVELOP-MENTAL FEVER?
THAT'S WHAT BABIES GET, RIGHT?
IT HASN'T BEEN MEDICALLY PROVEN, BUT THEY SUPPOSEDLY GET A FEVER IF THEY THINK TOO HARD.

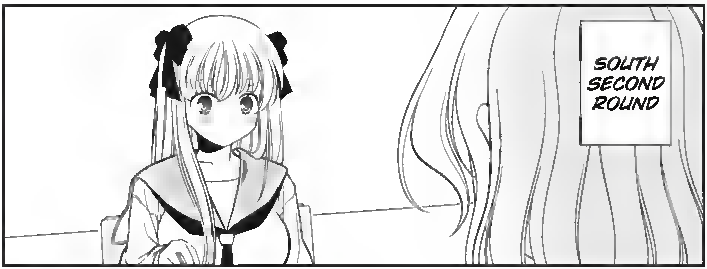

NODOKA APPARENTLY USES HER BRAIN WAY MORE THAN YOUR NORMAL MAHJONG PLAYER...
...SO A LOT OF DOPAMINE IS PRODUCED, WITH VARIOUS SIDE EFFECTS.

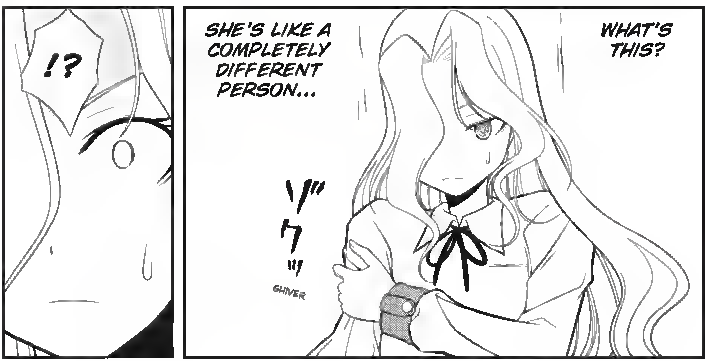

A TRANS-FORMED NODOKA IS LIKE THE PERSONI-FICATION OF A DIGITAL GODDESS —
YES...
ゴク GULP

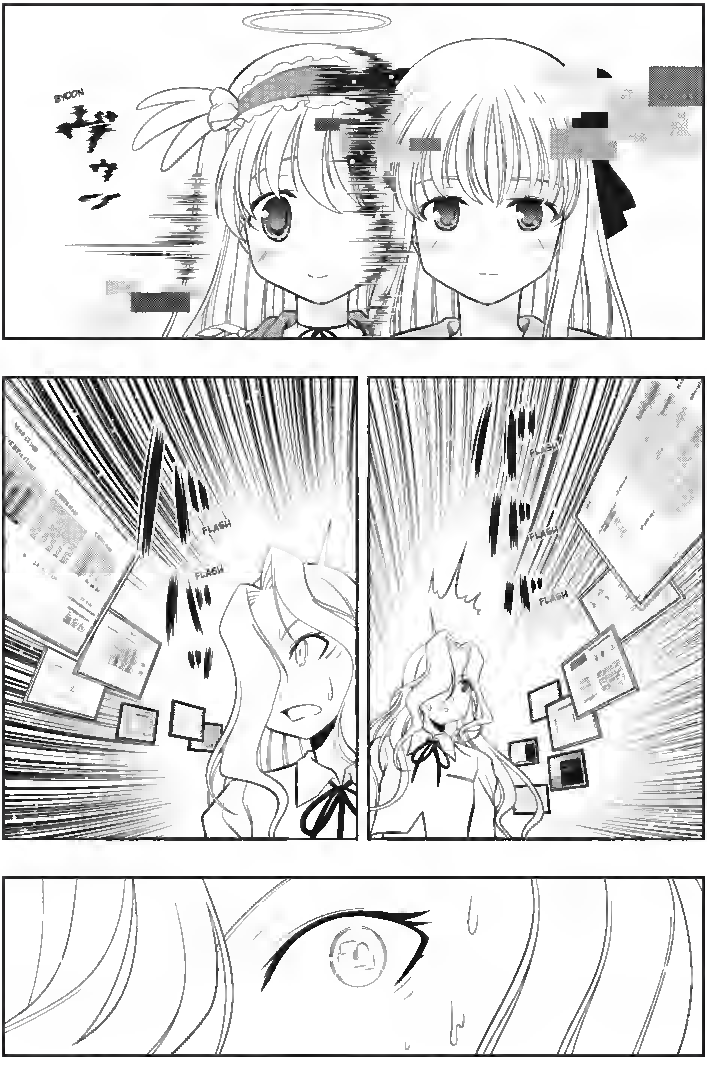


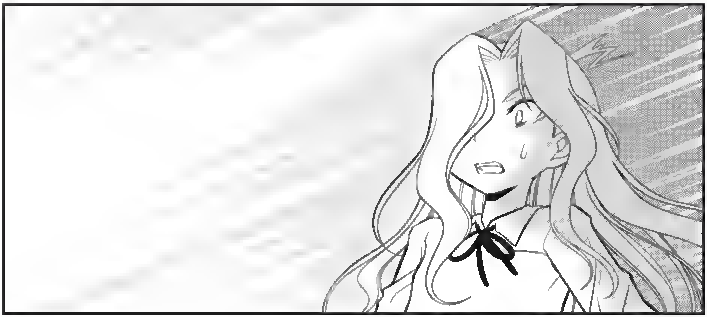
WHEN NODO-CHAN GETS LIKE THIS, NO ONE CAN STOP HER!


AN ANGEL DESCENDED FROM HEAVEN...

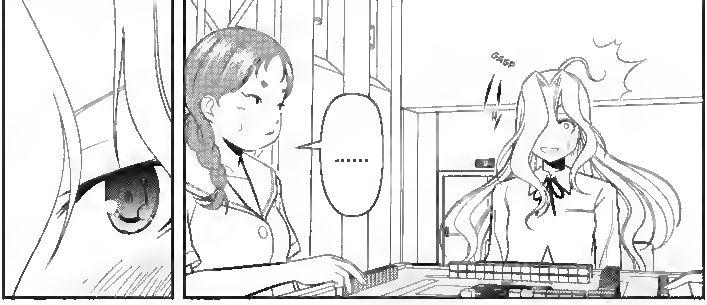

SOUTH SECOND ROUND


!?
SHE'S LIKE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON...
WHAT'S THIS?
SHIVER


BYOON
ヴォウン
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH



SHUTTER
SHUTTER
G.....
GOOD MORN-ING...
GOOD MORNING, NODOCCHI !!

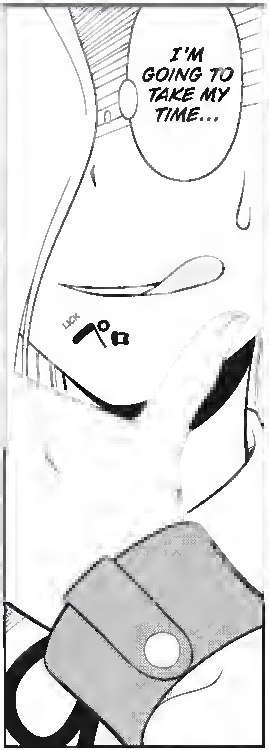

GASP
.....

NODOC
HEAVE
THIS IS THE "NODOCCHI" I MET ONLINE—
ACTUALLY, NO...

THIS FEELING... THIS PRESSURE...

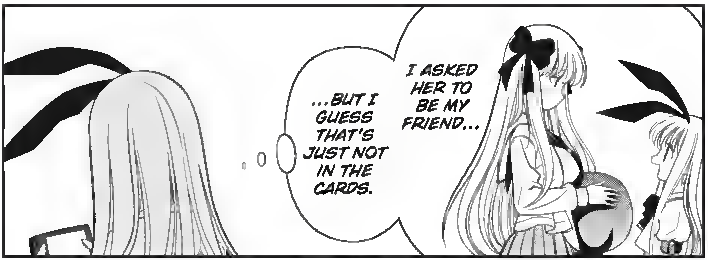
SHE'S MORE THAN THAT...
IN THE FLESH, SHE'S ESPECIALLY JUICY!!

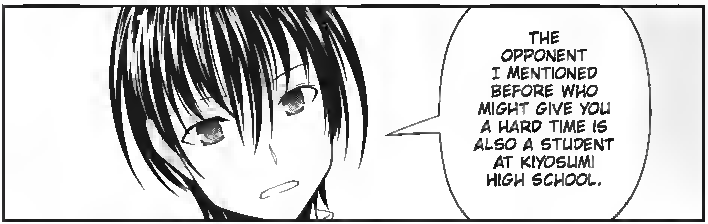
...SAVORING THIS FLAVOR, LAPPING IT UP UNTIL I'VE HAD MY FILL!!

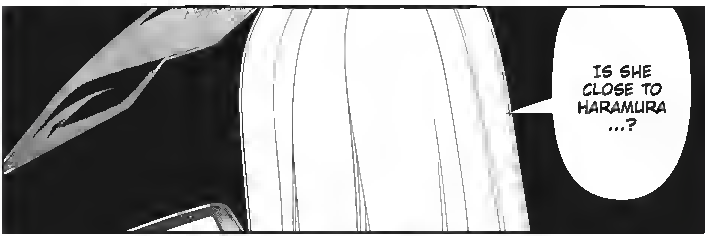

I'M GOING TO TAKE MY TIME...
LICK

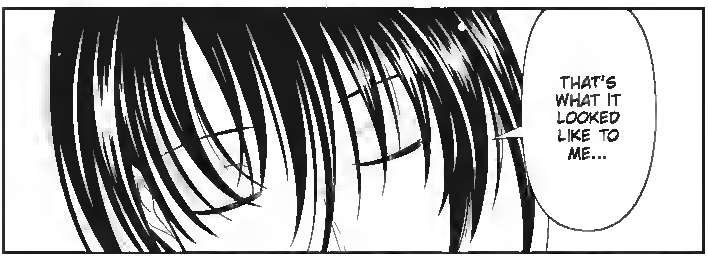
KO-ROMO-SAMA ...?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT MY LADY TOKA'S MATCH?
MY LADY TOKA IS IN SECOND WITH 104,700 POINTS.
IT'S THE FIRST HALF OF THE GAME, SOUTH HAND TWO, AND KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL IS IN THE LEAD WITH 118,100 POINTS
HARAMURA IS TOKA'S ENEMY?
IT WOULD SEEM SO.
HARA-MURA ...?
原村和
KAZUKA HARAMURA
118100


I ASKED HER TO BE MY FRIEND...
...BUT I GUESS THAT'S JUST NOT IN THE CARDS.

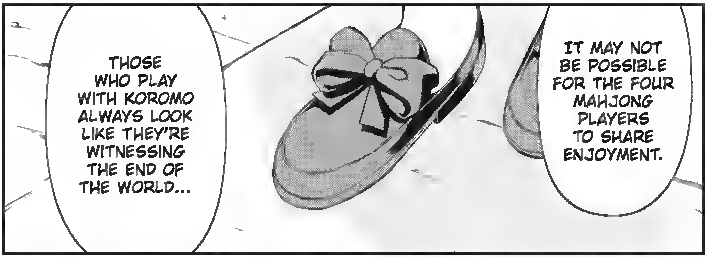

THE OPPONENT I MENTIONED BEFORE WHO MIGHT GIVE YOU A HARD TIME IS ALSO A STUDENT AT KIYOSUMI HIGH SCHOOL.


IS SHE CLOSE TO HARAMURA ...?

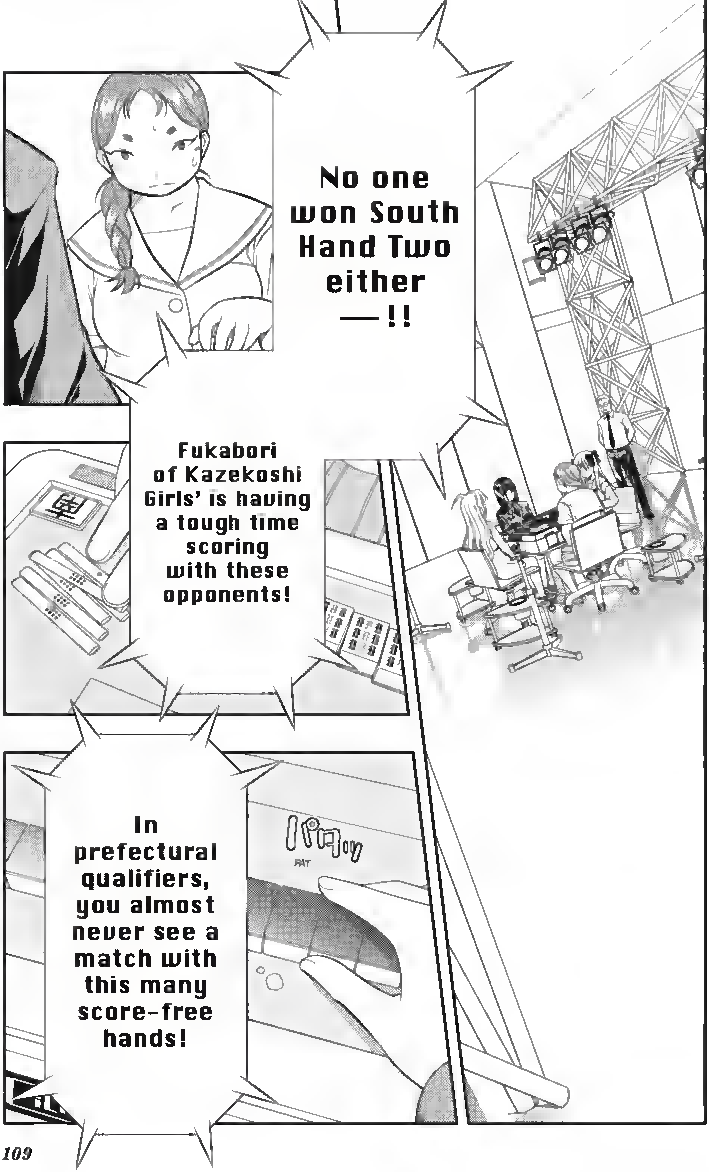

THAT'S WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE TO ME...

RUSTLE
I SEE...
KOROMO LIKES THIS SEASON.
WHAT A PLEASANT BREEZE.
MY MOTHER OFTEN SAID...
.....
IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS PERIOD FEELS SHORTER TO ME WITH EACH PASSING YEAR.
NEITHER HOT NOR COLD, AND THE NEW GREEN LEAVES SPARKLE AS IF IN ANTICIPATION OF SUMMER.

...YOU CAN'T OBTAIN HAPPINESS AND COMFORT THROUGH SELF-FULFILLMENT OVER THE LONG-TERM.
HAPPINESS EXISTS IN THE MOMENT.
APPRECIATING THIS LIGHT... THIS BREEZE... THIS TIME... IS ALSO A FORM OF HAPPINESS.
AND THE HEART THAT WISHES TO SHARE IT IS AIMED TOWARD LOVE AND PLEASURE.
BUT THAT ISN'T THE WAY FOR MAHJONG.

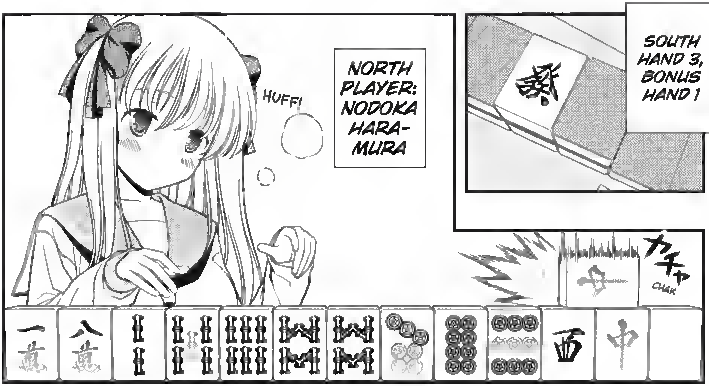

IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE FOUR MAHJONG PLAYERS TO SHARE ENJOYMENT.
THOSE WHO PLAY WITH KOROMO ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THEY'RE WITNESSING THE END OF THE WORLD...

WHEN THAT HAPPENS ...
...KOROMO ENDS UP BEING ALL ALONE AGAIN.

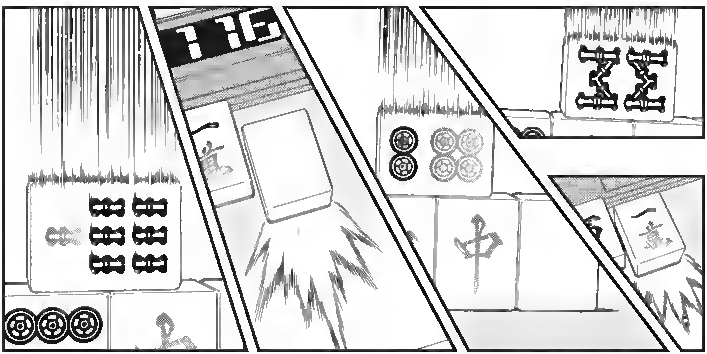

No one won South Hand Two either —!!
Fukabori of Kazekoshi Girls' is having a tough time scoring with these opponents!
In prefectural qualifiers, you almost never see a match with this many score-free hands!

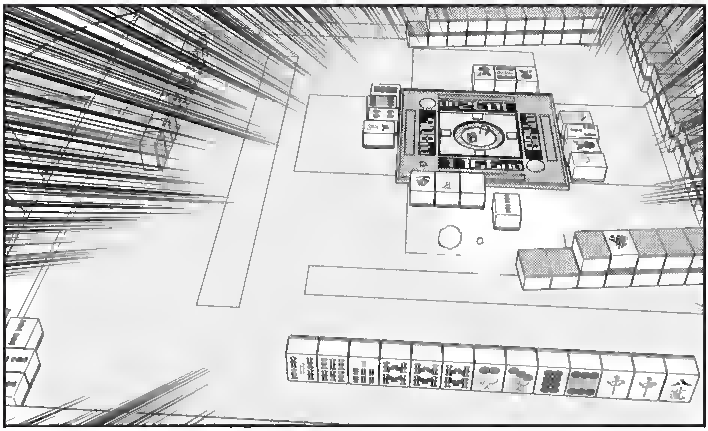
HAND 30: PERFECT GAME

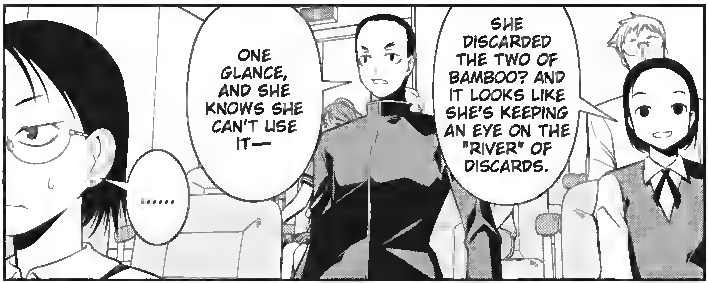
KIYOSUMI
HIGH SCHOOL
NODOKA
HARAMURA
116,600
KAZEKOSHI
GIRLS' SCHOOL
SUMIYO
FUKABORI
90,800

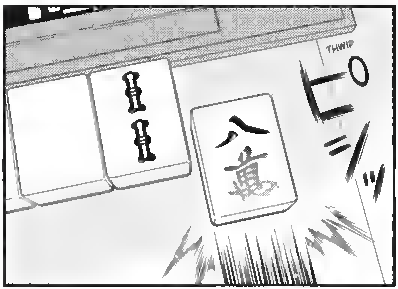

HUFF!
NORTH PLAYER: NODOKA HARA-MURA
SOUTH HAND 3, BONUS HAND 1
カチャ
CHAK

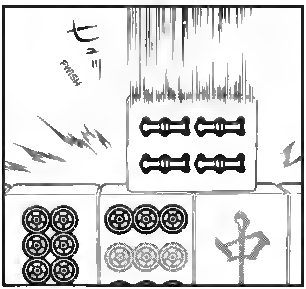
BUT THE DEALER'S ALREADY DISCARDED ONE!
SHE HAS TWO DORA!

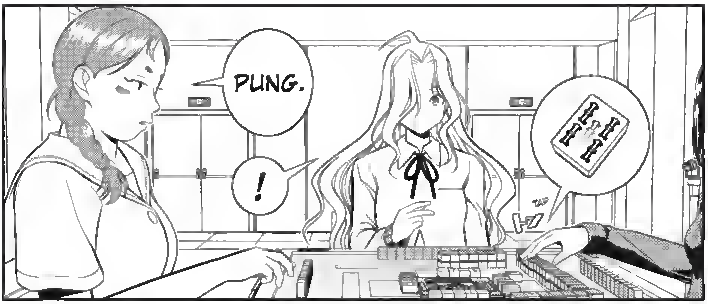


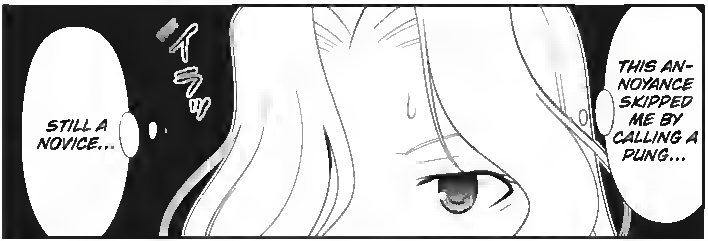


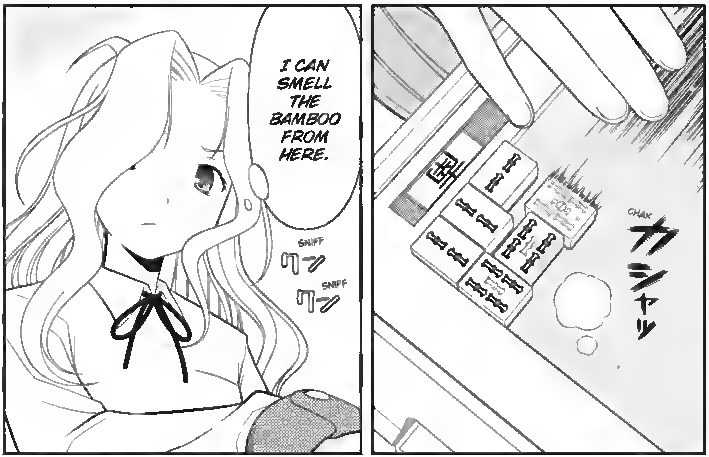

ONE GLANCE, AND SHE KNOWS SHE CAN'T USE IT—
.....
SHE DISCARDED THE TWO OF BAMBOO? AND IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S KEEPING AN EYE ON THE "RIVER" OF DISCARDS.


THWIP
ヒシ
八萬

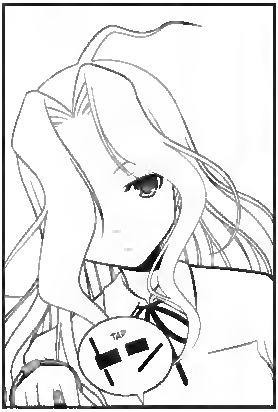

ヒュ
PHISH
中


PUNG.
!
TAP
トン

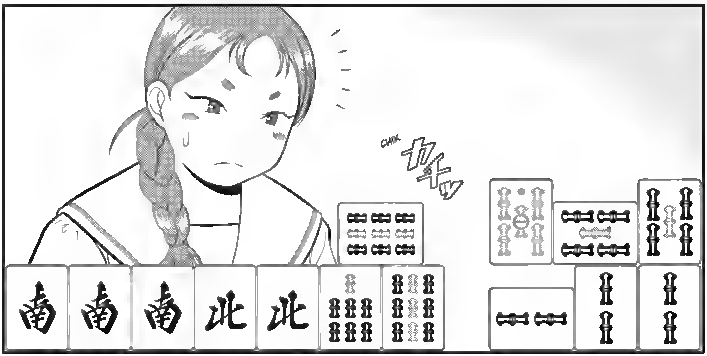

イラッ
STILL A NOVICE...
THIS ANNOYANCE SKIPPED ME BY CALLING A PUNG...


I CAN SMELL THE BAMBOO FROM HERE.
SNIFF
クン
SNIFF
クン
CHAK
カシャッ

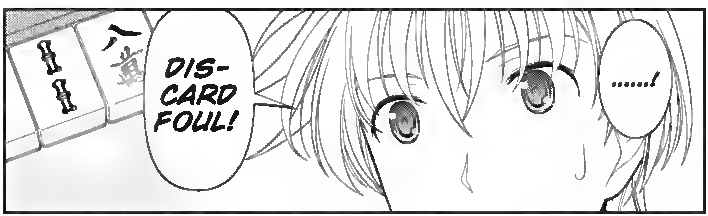
RIICHI, YO.
SEVENTH TURN


TAP
トン

Momoko Toyoko of Tsuruga Academy with a riichi!!
CHIK
カシッ

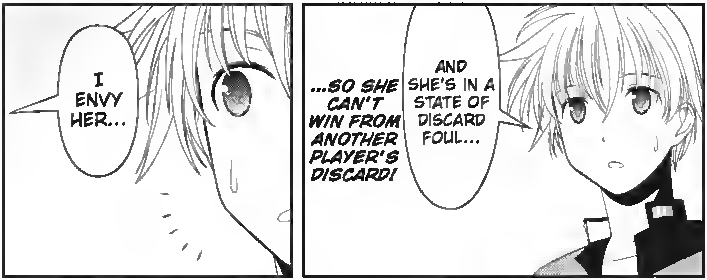

CHIK
カチッ

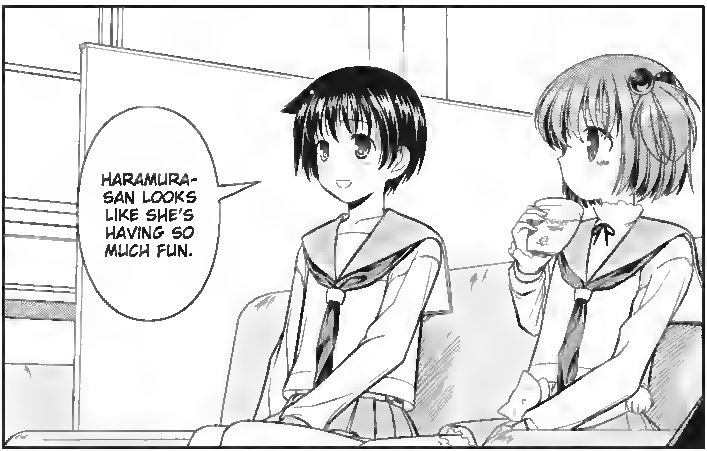
THIS ONE BEARS WATCHING TOO.
DISCARDING THAT TILE AFTER THE DEALER CALLED RIICHI...
SMACK
KAZEKOSHI'S FUKABORI IS GOING FOR A SIX-HAN HAND!! THIS IS HER CHANCE TO TURN THINGS AROUND!
FWISH



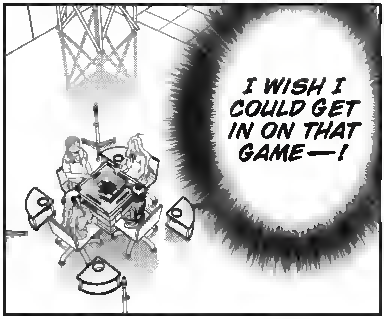
DISCARD FOUL: SITUATION IN WHICH THE PLAYER MAY NOT GO OUT WITH RON (USING A DISCARD FROM ANOTHER PLAYER) BECAUSE THEY HAVE DISCARDED ANY OF THE TILES THAT THEY ARE WAITING ON. HOWEVER, THEY MAY STILL GO OUT WITH TSUMO.

BUT EVEN WITH A DISCARD FOUL, WITH A LOT OF WAITS, NODOKA SHOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO CALL A RIICHI...
WHAT, DO YOU NEED GLASSES?
ONLY ONE EIGHT OF BAMBOO AND ONE RED DRAGON ARE LEFT.


AND SHE'S IN A STATE OF DISCARD FOUL...
...SO SHE CAN'T WIN FROM ANOTHER PLAYER'S DISCARD!
I ENVY HER...

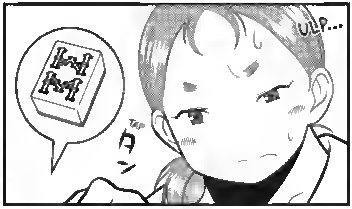

HARAMURA-SAN LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HAVING SO MUCH FUN.

EVEN AT TRAINING CAMP, SHE WAS AMAZING WHEN SHE GOT LIKE THIS.

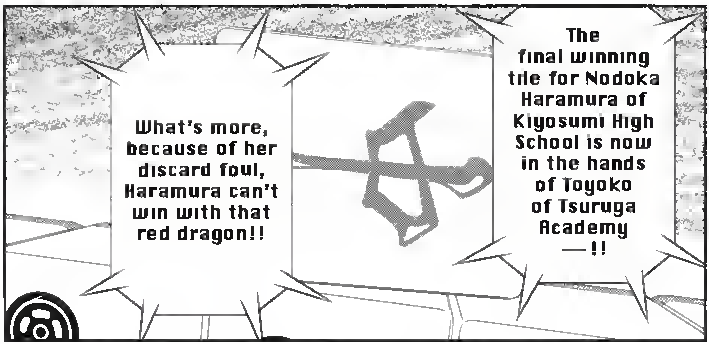

I WISH I COULD GET IN ON THAT GAME—!

I WANT TO PLAY TOO—
ウズ
FIDGET
ウズ
FIDGET

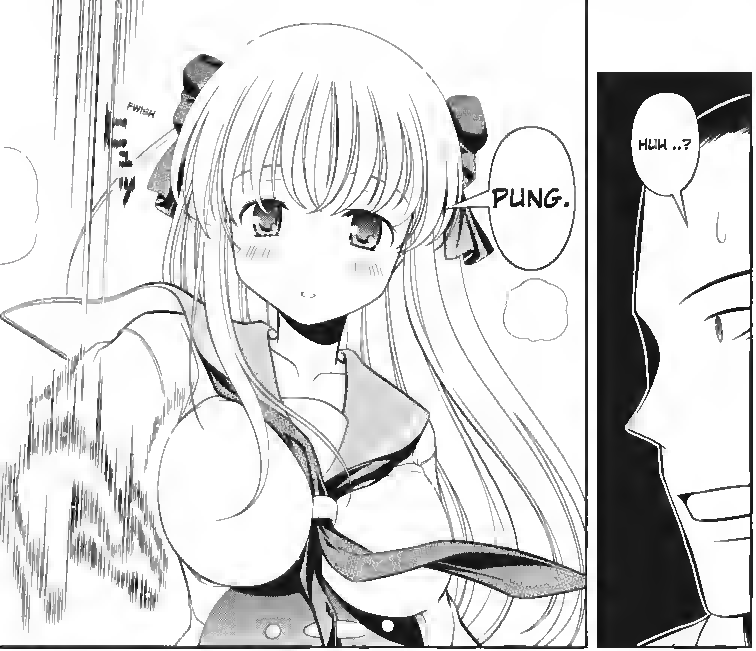
THWIP


ULP...
TAP
カン

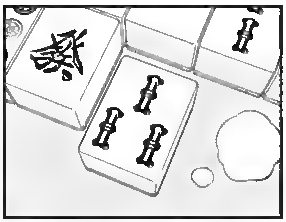
Wh-what's this...!?
.....


What's more, because of her discard foul, Haramura can't win with that red dragon!!
The final winning tile for Nodoka Haramura of Kiyosumi High School is now in the hands of Toyoko of Tsuruga Academy —!!

GIVE ME A BREAK.
HER LAST HOPE HAS JUST BEEN EXTINGUISHED —!!

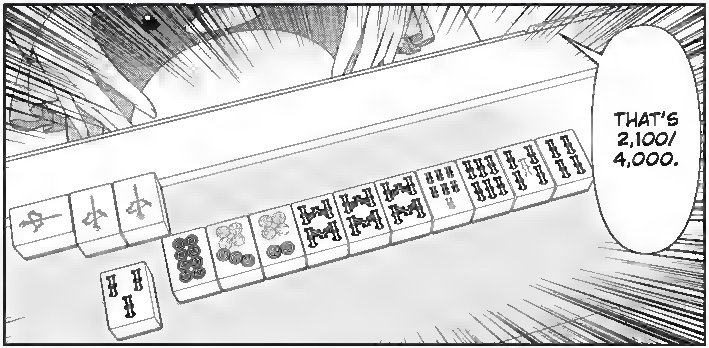

FWISH
PUNG.
HUH ..?

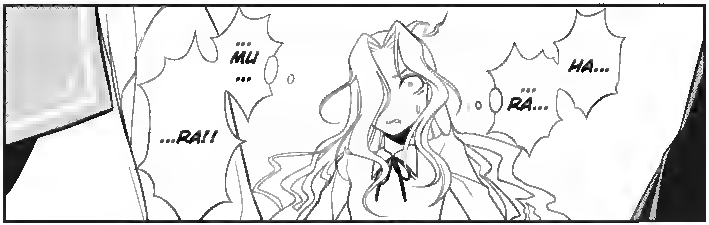
SHE CHANGED HER WAIT? WOULDN'T SHE NORMALLY HAVE DISCARDED THE RED DRAGON AS A SAFE TILE AND FOLDED?
EVEN IF SHE CALLED IT, THERE ARE FOUR SAFE TILES...PLUS THAT FIVE-SIDED WAIT HAS PLENTY OF WINNING TILES LEFT!

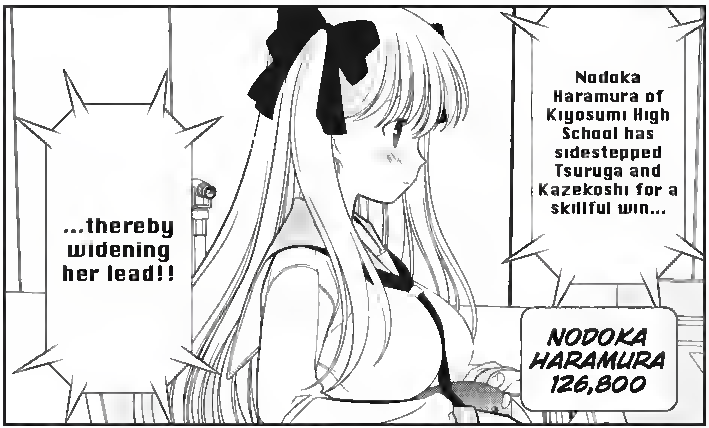


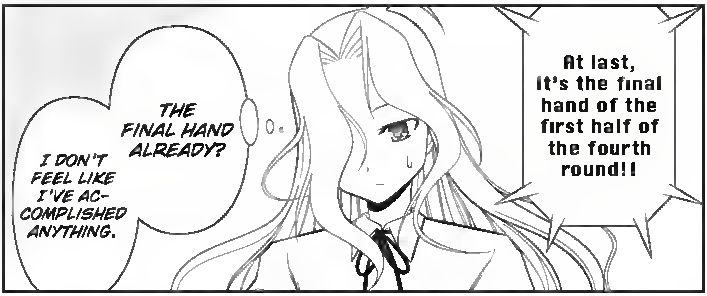
CHAK

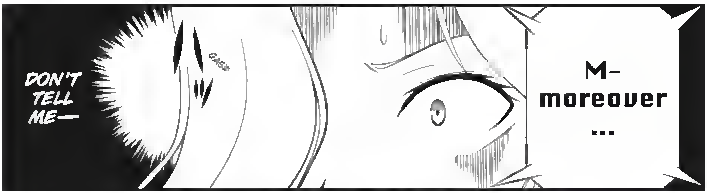
WHOOSH
SMACK
WHAT ...?
TSUMO...
!!
CLACK


THAT'S 2,100/ 4,000.


...MU...
...RA!!
...RA...
HA...


Nodoka Haramura of Kiyosumi High School has sidestepped Tsuruga and Kazekoshi for a skillful win...
...thereby widening her lead!!
NODOKA HARAMURA 126,800


At last, it's the final hand of the first half of the fourth round!!
THE FINAL HAND ALREADY?
I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'VE ACCOMPLISHED ANYTHING.



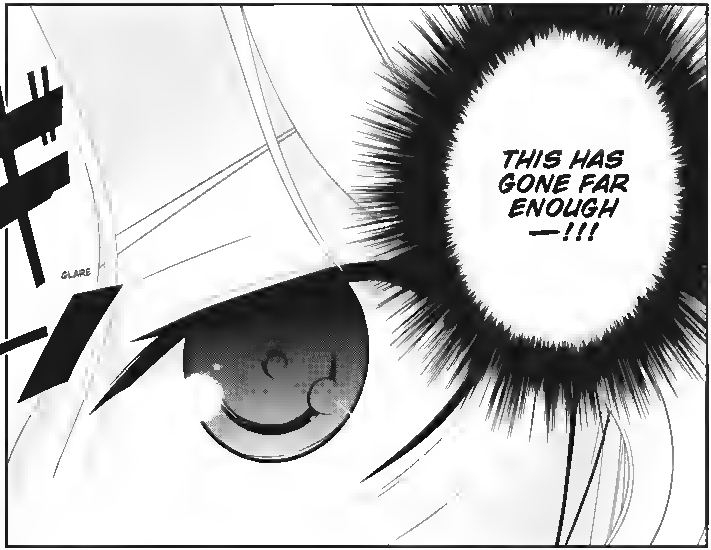
YAKITORI MAHJONG LINGO FOR A SITUATION IN WHICH A PLAYER HAS FAILED TO WIN A HAND DURING THE COURSE OF THE GAME

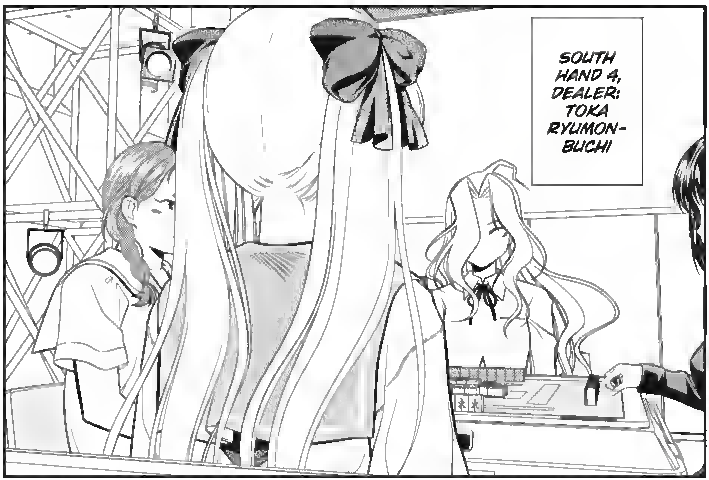
If Haramura keeps a grip on this last hand, she'll have a perfect game...!!

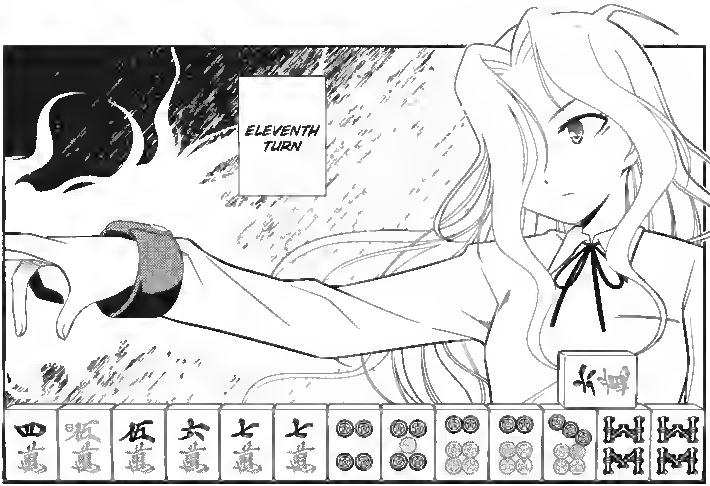
CRACKLE
.....
TOKA...

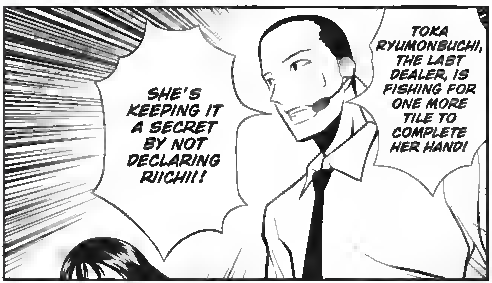
HAND 31: BLOCK

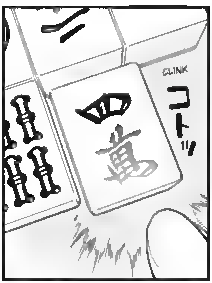
P—
PERFECT, HE SAID ...!?
GNASH
ギリッ
NON-SENSE ...
HARAMURA WAS JUST LUCKY!


GLARE
THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH —!!!

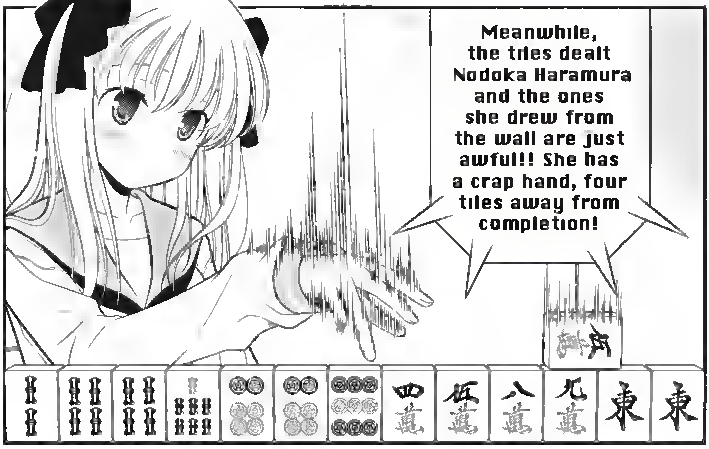

SOUTH HAND 4, DEALER: TOKA RYUMON-BUCHI


ELEVENTH TURN

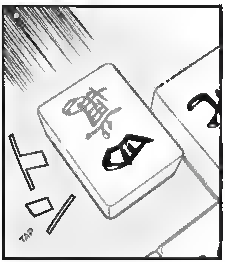

TOKA RYUMONBUCHI, THE LAST DEALER, IS FISHING FOR ONE MORE TILE TO COMPLETE HER HAND!
SHE'S KEEPING IT A SECRET BY NOT DECLARING RIICHI!!

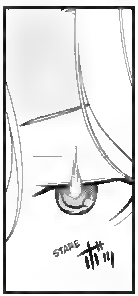

CLINK

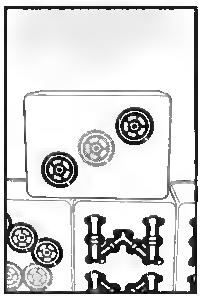
WELL, THE PROSPECT OF A PERFECT GAME IS EXCITING FOR THE SPECTATORS.
MAN, THIS GUY CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF HARAMURA.
Will this stroke block Nodoka Haramura's perfect game—!?

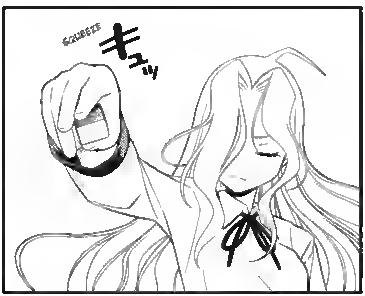

Meanwhile, the tiles dealt Nodoka Haramura and the ones she drew from the wall are just awful!! She has a crap hand, four tiles away from completion!

MY GUESS IS SHE'S DEDUCED RYUMON-BUCHI'S TENPAI FROM HER DISCARDED TILES AND IS PLAYING IT BY EAR.
SHE'S THREE TILES AWAY FROM A SEVEN PAIRS.
WHAT'S THIS...?
SHE'S FOLDING?




STARE

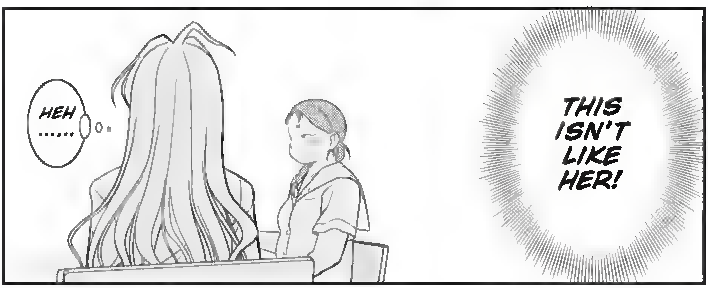


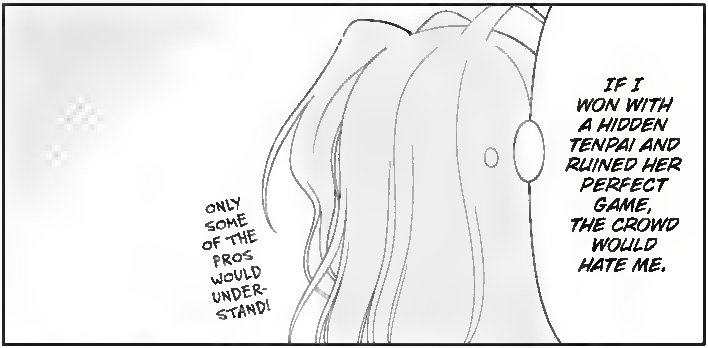

SQUEEZE

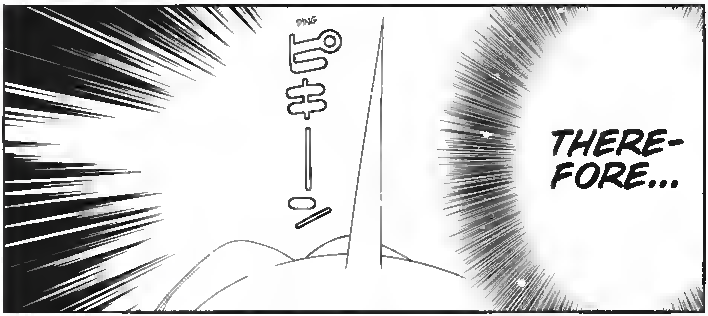
RICH!!
トン
KASHAK

HUH?
ONLINE, YOU WOULDN'T CALL A RIICHI IF YOU HAD A HIDDEN HAND WORTH 11,600, WOULD YOU...?
!?
TOKA ...!?

NORMALLY, TOKA WOULD PUT PRIORITY ON THE ODDS OF WINNING OVER POINTS AND GO WITH THE HIDDEN TENPAI.
EVEN MORE SO IF HER GOAL IS TO BLOCK HARAMURA'S PERFECT GAME...

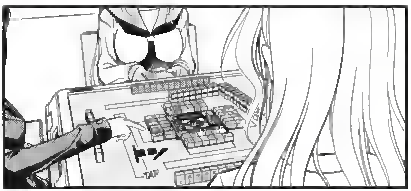

THIS ISN'T LIKE HER!
HEH ....


IF I WON WITH A HIDDEN TENPAI AND RUINED HER PERFECT GAME, THE CROWD WOULD HATE ME.
ONLY SOME OF THE PROS WOULD UNDER-STAND!

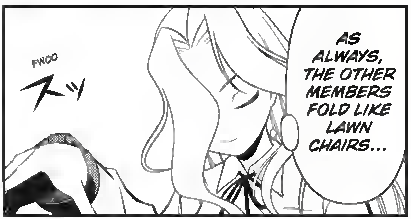

THERE-FORE...
PING
ピピピ——ン

!
SHE'S NOT THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING —?

I'LL DECLARE RIICHI AND STILL WIN—
I'LL OUT-SHINE HARA-MURA!!

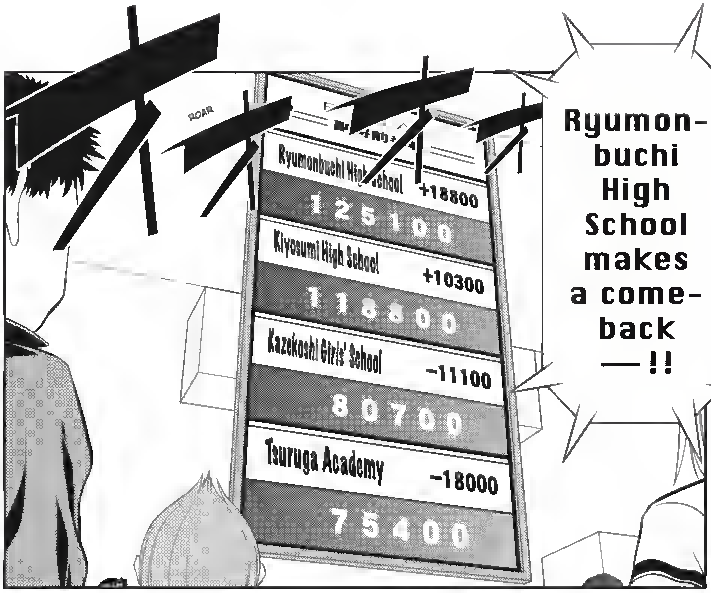

トン
TAP

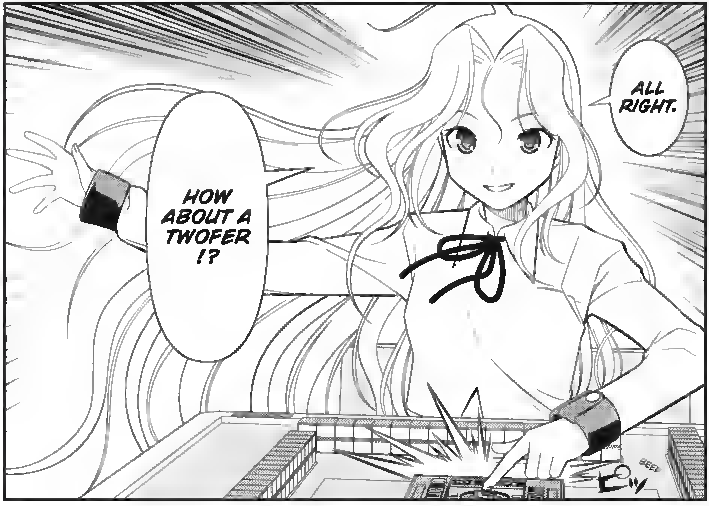
SHE'S TOSS-ING HER ONLINE PLAY-ING STYLE JUST SO SHE CAN STAND OUT —!?


PAGO
スッ
AS ALWAYS, THE OTHER MEMBERS FOLD LIKE LAWN CHAIRS...

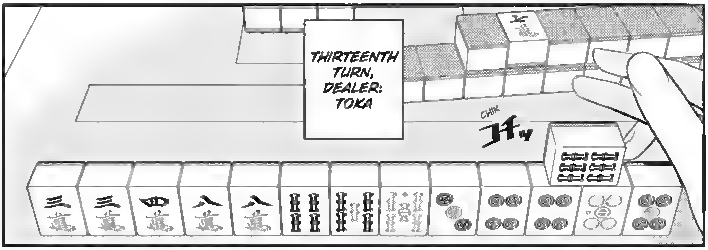
SWISH
WELCOME TO MY PARLOR!
TSUMO!!
BAM

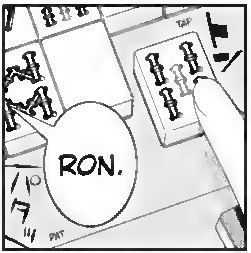
CLACK
THAT'LL BE 8,000 FROM EVERYONE!
!!
Oh... A dealer's baiman !!
And she blocked Nodoka Haramura's perfect game — !!

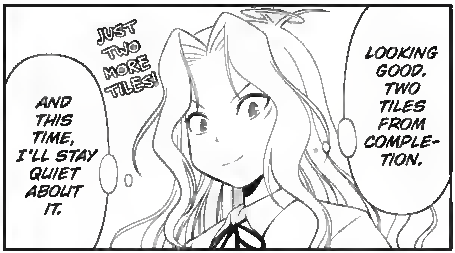

ROAR
Ryumonbuchi High School +18800
125100
Kiyosumi High School +10300
114800
Kazekoshi Girls' School -11100
80700
Tsuruga Academy -18000
75400
Ryumon-buchi High School makes a come-back —!!

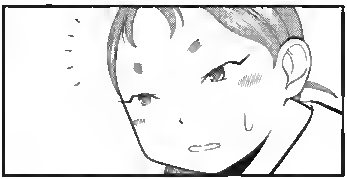

ALL RIGHT.
HOW ABOUT A TWOFER !?
BEEP

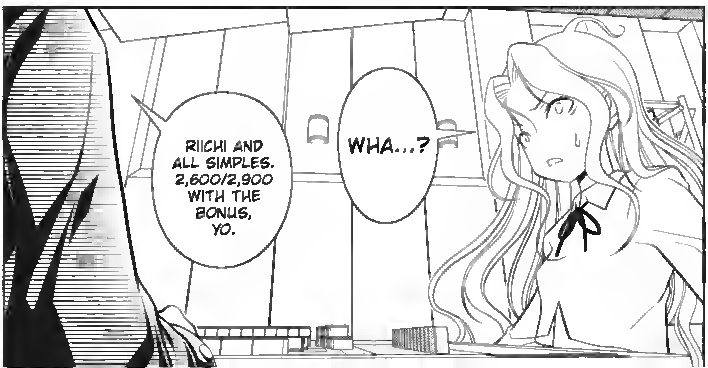
WELL, THAT WORKED OUT...
HARA-MURA ONLY PLAYS ONLINE-STYLE ...
PHEW..
...WHILE TOKA SHIFTS STYLES ONCE IN A WHILE.
THAT CAN BE A WEAK-NESS..
...AND IT CAN ALSO BE SCARY.
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I'M PAINFULLY REMINDED THAT TOKA IS KOROMO'S COUSIN.
SOUTH HAND 4, BONUS ROUND 1


THIRTEENTH TURN, DEALER: TOKA


RON.


JUST TWO MORE TILES!
AND THIS TIME, I'LL STAY QUIET ABOUT IT.
LOOKING GOOD. TWO TILES FROM COMPLE-TION.

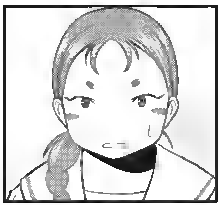


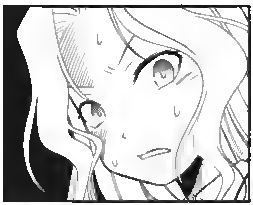

RIICHI AND ALL SIMPLES. 2,600/2,900 WITH THE BONUS, YO.
WHA...?

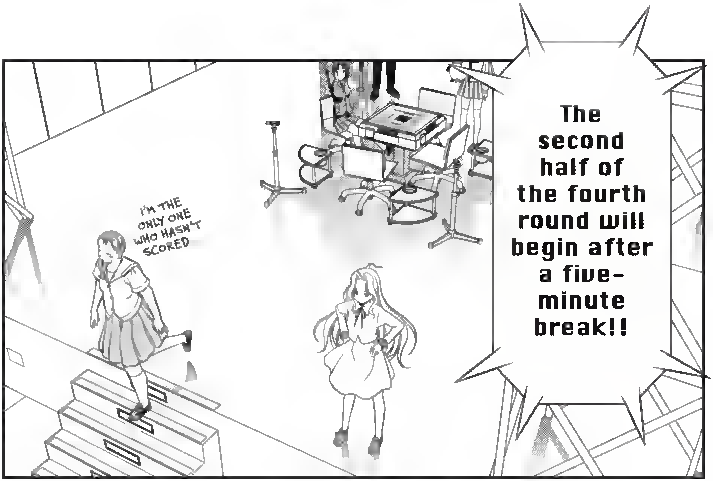
WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN —!?
RIICHI !?
IT'S NOT POSSI-BLE!
HOW ...?
TOKA WAS CAUGHT OFF GUARD AND FED HER A WINNING TILE!?
And so...
MOMOKO TOYOKO OF TSURUGA ACADEMY HAS WON 2,900 POINTS FROM THE LEADER, RYUMON-BUCHI!!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE —!?

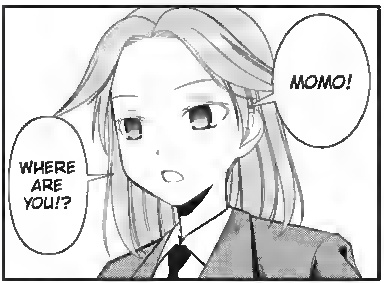
THAT'S THE END OF THE FIRST HALF, YO.
FIRST-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY MOMOKO TOYOKO
FWOO
DUCK

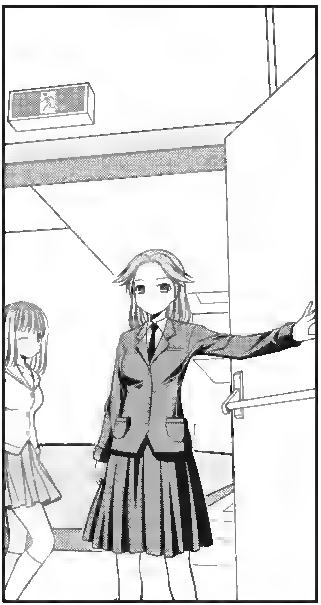
PUFF

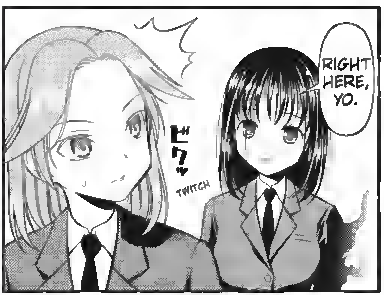





I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO HASN'T SCORED
The second half of the fourth round will begin after a five-minute break!!


MOMO!
WHERE ARE YOU!?



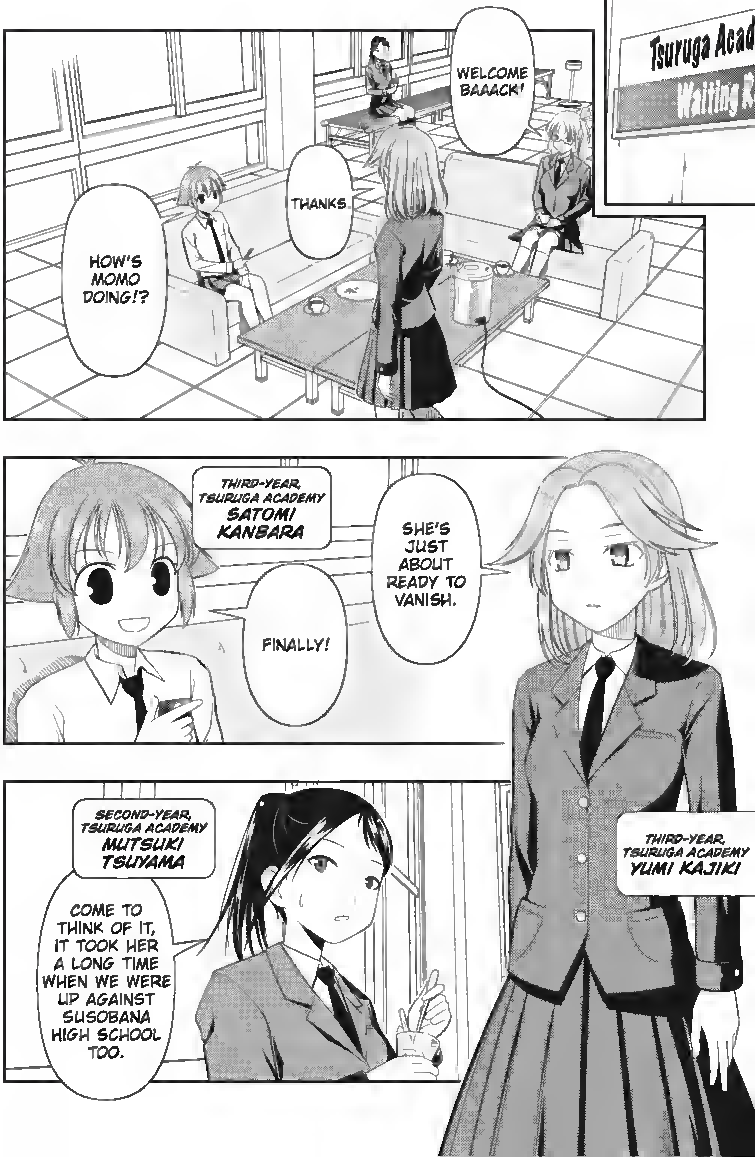

RIGHT HERE, YO.
ピク
TWITCH

AS EXPECTED, THE FINAL'S TOUGH, YO.
IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO "VANISH."
DO YOU FEEL CONFI-DENT?
YES.
YO, I OWE YOU, SENPAI, FOR TAKING INTEREST IN ME DESPITE MY TOTAL LACK OF PRESENCE.

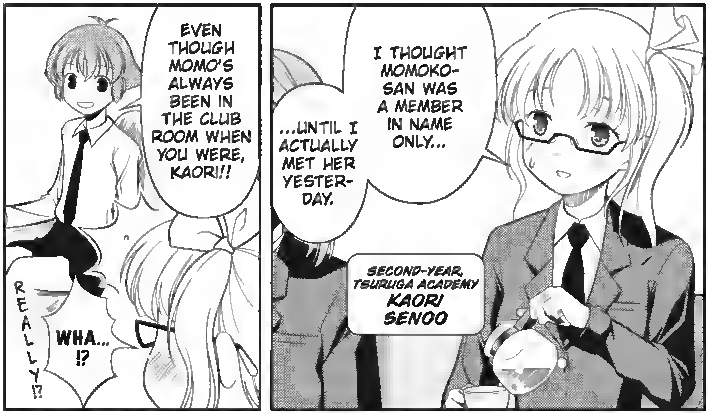
MY RIICHI IS THE SAME AS A HIDDEN TENPAI.
I WON'T DISCARD ANOTHER PLAYER'S WINNING TILE.
AND EVEN IF I DO DISCARD A USEFUL TILE, THE OTHER PLAYER WILL END UP WITH A DISCARD FOUL.
I DON'T EXIST.

FROM HERE ON OUT ...
...THE GAME WILL BELONG TO STEALTH MOMO, YO!!

HAND 32: SENPAI

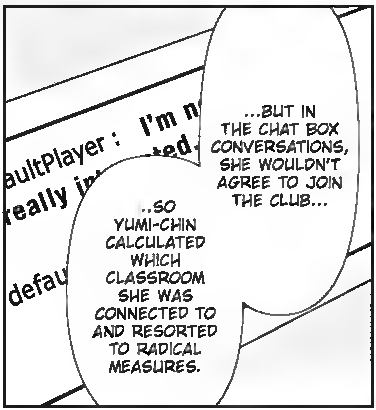

Tsuruga Acad
Waiting R
WELCOME BAAACK!
THANKS.
HOW'S MOMO DOING!?
THIRD-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY SATOMI KANBARA
FINALLY!
SHE'S JUST ABOUT READY TO VANISH.
THIRD-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY YUMI KAJIKI
SECOND-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY MUTSUKI TSUYAMA
COME TO THINK OF IT, IT TOOK HER A LONG TIME WHEN WE WERE UP AGAINST SUSOBANA HIGH SCHOOL TOO.

SUSOBANA IS A STRONG SCHOOL. THEY GOT THIRD PLACE IN THE FALL PREFECTURAL RANKINGS.
BUT EVEN SO, THEY TOTALLY LOST SIGHT OF MOMO BY THE SECOND SOUTH HAND.
I'M IMPRESSED THEY LASTED THAT LONG!


I THOUGHT MOMOKO-SAN WAS A MEMBER IN NAME ONLY...
...UNTIL I ACTUALLY MET HER YESTER-DAY.
SECOND-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY
KAORI SENOO
EVEN THOUGH MOMO'S ALWAYS BEEN IN THE CLUB ROOM WHEN YOU WERE, KAORI!!
WHA... !?
REALLY!?

YUMI-CHIN FOUND MOMO BEFORE YOU BECAME A MEMBER, KAORI.
HERE YOU ARE.
THANK YOU.
.....
"FOUND HER"?

I THINK IT WAS ABOUT A MONTH AGO.
THE DEADLINE FOR ENTERING THE TEAM TOURNAMENT WAS LOOMING, AND WE WERE NERVOUS BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MEMBERS.
I KNEW YOU WERE A LOCK BECAUSE WE'RE OLD FRIENDS, SO YOU'D DO WHAT I SAY.
BUT WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY PROSPECTS FOR THE FINAL MEMBER.
WE TRIED VARIOUS WAYS TO RECRUIT PEOPLE...
....INCLUDING CONNECTING A MAHJONG SERVER TO THE SCHOOL'S LAN.
MOMO POPPED UP ON IT.

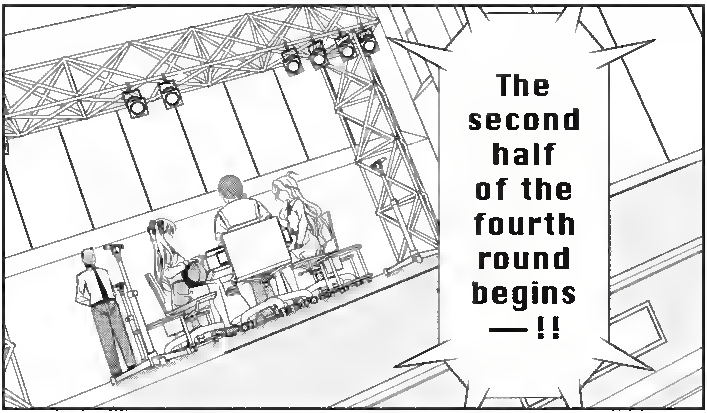

...BUT IN THE CHAT BOX CONVERSATIONS, SHE WOULDN'T AGREE TO JOIN THE CLUB...
..SO YUMI-CHIN CALCULATED WHICH CLASSROOM SHE WAS CONNECTED TO AND RESORTED TO RADICAL MEASURES.

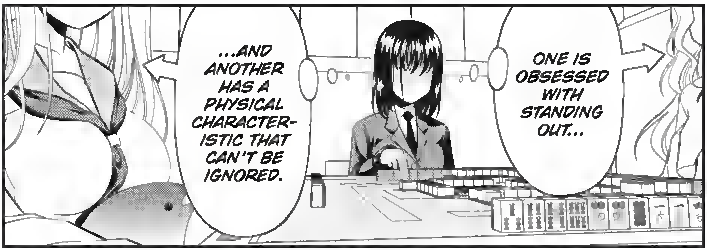
YUMI-CHIN WAS CHARMED BY HER PLAYING STYLE AND PERSONALITY...
.....

SHE BURST INTO THE FIRST-YEAR CLASS A ROOM.
I PINPOINTED THE CLASS-ROOM AND STORMED IN, BUT I COULDN'T FIND MY TARGET.
EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD TO BE THERE!
WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW, I REALIZE THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD'VE SPOTTED MOMO, WHO DESERVES A GOLD MEDAL WHEN IT COMES TO FADING INTO THE BACK-GROUND.
OH...? I HEARD ABOUT THAT. THAT WAS YOU, KAJIKI-SENPAI?

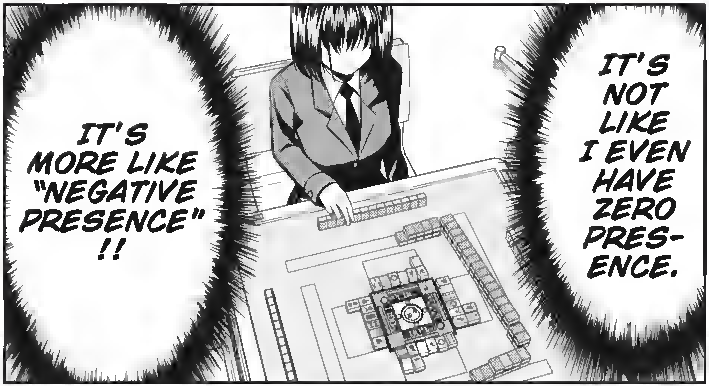
I...
...WANT YOU!!
I SHOUTED WITHOUT THINKING...
FOR SOME REASON, THE PRINCESS OF WALLFLOWERS SEEMED TO LIKE YUMI-CHIN'S OUTBURST—
.....
スッ
FWOO
YOU'RE AN INTERESTING PERSON, YO.
!
スッ
FOO

IF...
...YOU WANT ME, YOU CAN HAVE ME!!
YUMI-CHIN'S ECCENTRIC BEHAV-IOR...
...PRIED OPEN THAT SEALED DOOR!

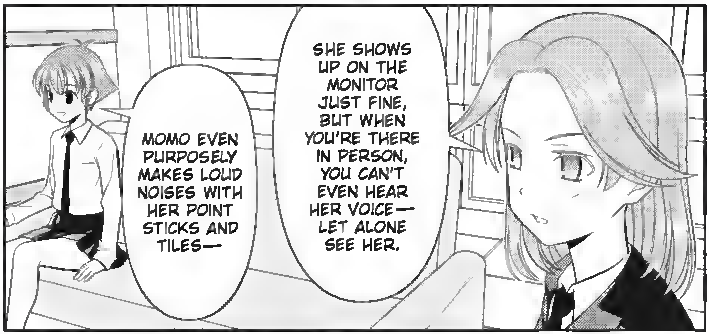

The second half of the fourth round begins —!!

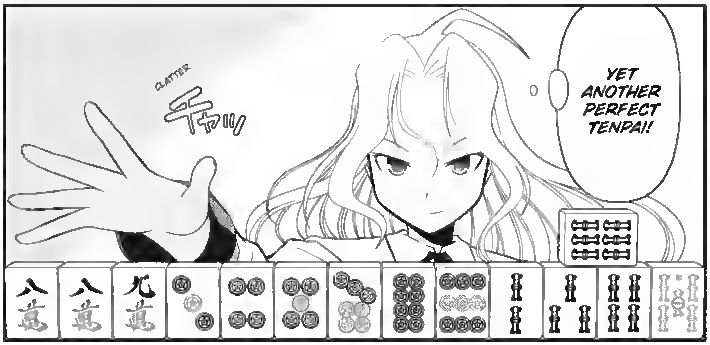

ONE IS OBSESSED WITH STANDING OUT...
...AND ANOTHER HAS A PHYSICAL CHARACTER-ISTIC THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED.

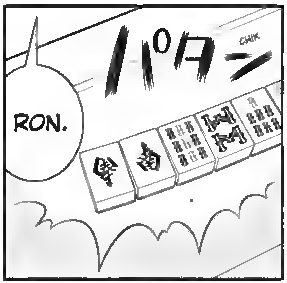
BUT I'M THE OPPOSITE, YO.
FIRST-YEAR, TSURUGA ACADEMY MOMOKO TOYOKO


IT'S NOT LIKE I EVEN HAVE ZERO PRES-ENCE.
IT'S MORE LIKE "NEGATIVE PRESENCE" !!

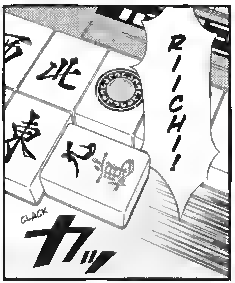
AND THAT EXTENDS TO MY DISCARDS, YO!!
FWISH

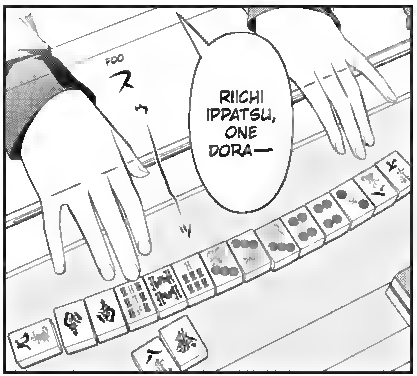

SHE SHOWS UP ON THE MONITOR JUST FINE, BUT WHEN YOU'RE THERE IN PERSON, YOU CAN'T EVEN HEAR HER VOICE— LET ALONE SEE HER.
MOMO EVEN PURPOSELY MAKES LOUD NOISES WITH HER POINT STICKS AND TILES—

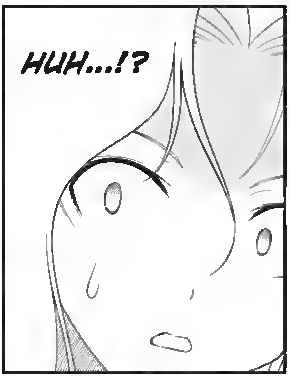

CLATTER
YET ANOTHER PERFECT TENPAI!


CHIK
RON.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT...?
IT'S A DORA, YO.


RICHI!
CLACK


FOO
RICHI IPPATSU, ONE DORA—


HUH...!?

5,200, YO!
ユラッ
FWOOO

I FELL PREY TO HER RIICHI AGAIN —!?
DID YOU ACTUALLY DECLARE A RIICHI OUT LOUD!?
I SURE DID, YO!
HA HA HA
SHE COULDN'T HEAR MOMO'S VOICE EITHER!
キュイ
RYWHHH

BUT I'M SATISFIED WITH JUST ONE PERSON WATCHING ME.
COME TO THINK OF IT, A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY WATCHING ME THROUGH THE CAMERAS.
AND TONS OF PEOPLE ARE PROBABLY WATCHING THIS MATCH.
IF I DON'T WIN WITH THIS TEAM COMPETITION, I WON'T BE OF ANY VALUE TO YOU, YO.
PLEASE KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON ME, SENPAI.
SINGING OR DANCING WERE THE ONLY WAYS I COULD GET PEOPLE TO NOTICE ME, YO.
AM I BEING OSTRACIZED!?
WHAT, ARE YOU IGNORING ME!?
AS A KID, I OFTEN HEARD THAT I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A "PRESENCE."

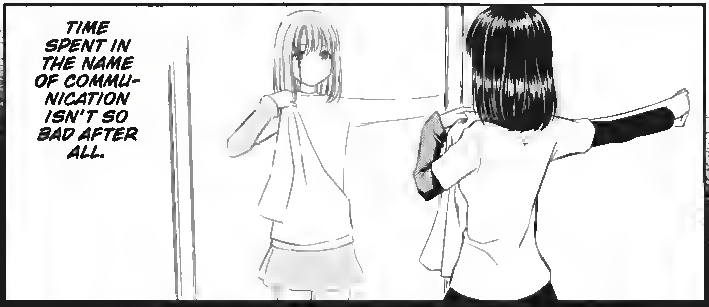
...SPEND TIME AND MONEY TO GATHER INFORMATION AND TAKE VARIOUS ACTIONS, YO.
IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY, I KNOW THAT MOST PEOPLE...

BUT WHEN I WEIGHED THAT PAIN-IN-THE-ASS STUFF AGAINST WHAT YOU GAIN FROM COMMUNICATING, I WAS WILLING TO CALL IT QUITS ON THE WHOLE THING.

IT'D BEEN THAT WAY FOR ME SINCE I WAS A KID, SO IT WASN'T PARTICULARLY STRESSFUL. I WAS JUST REINFORCING MY NATURAL LACK OF PRESENCE, YO.
AND SO, I ABANDONED COMMUNI-CATING WITH PEOPLE...

BUT THAT'S WHY I'LL DO MY BEST, YO.

...GONNA DO MY BEST!
I'M...


TIME SPENT IN THE NAME OF COMMUNICATION ISN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL.

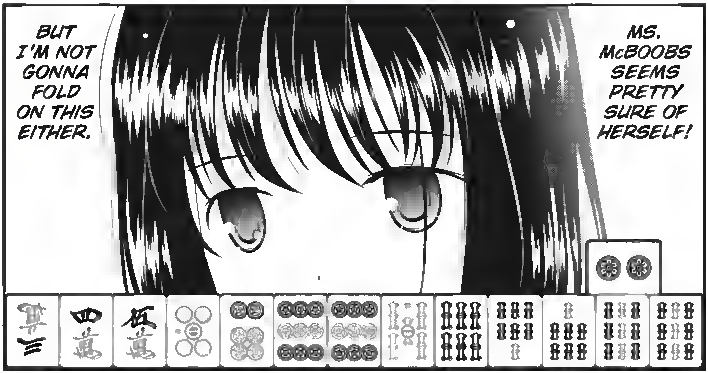
THAT TIME CAN EVEN BE FUN!

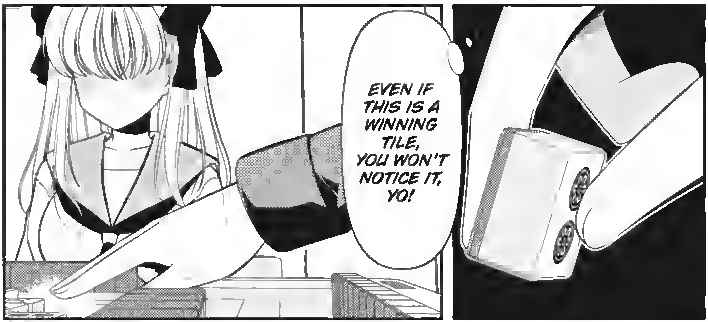
THAT'S WHAT...
...SENPAI TAUGHT ME, YO!

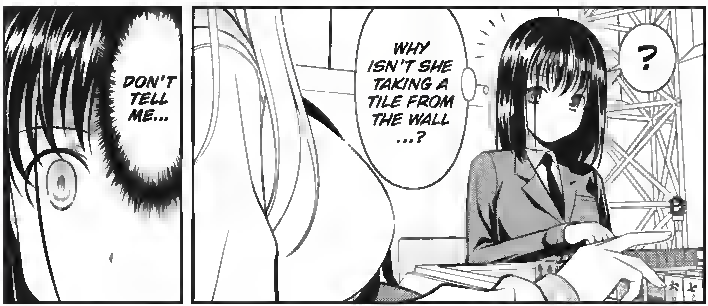
HAND 33: CONCLUSION

QUAK
チャッ
RIICHI!

Nodoka Haramura announces a riichi!!
Is she going to keep racing ahead in this second half —!?


BUT I'M NOT GONNA FOLD ON THIS EITHER.
MS. McBOOBS SEEMS PRETTY SURE OF HERSELF!


EVEN IF THIS IS A WINNING TILE, YOU WON'T NOTICE IT, YO!

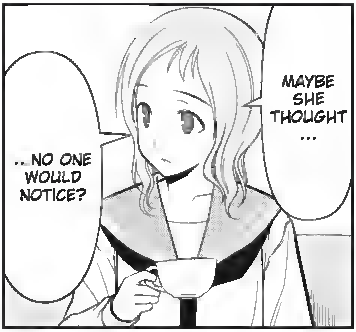

DON'T TELL ME...
WHY ISN'T SHE TAKING A TILE FROM THE WALL ...?
?

WHA.....?
RATTLE

EVEN THOUGH MOMO'S IN STEALTH MODE...

...ANOTHER PLAYER WON WITH HER DISCARD!?

RON.
8,000.
!!


MAYBE SHE THOUGHT ...
.. NO ONE WOULD NOTICE?

THE ENEMY LOOKS SHOCKED, EVEN THOUGH SHE DISCARDED A TOTALLY RISKY TILE!

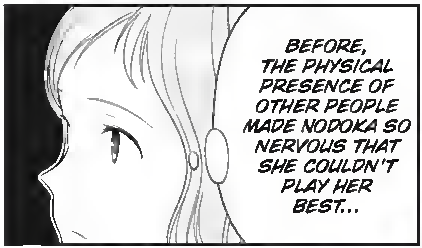
IT ISN'T WHETHER I CAN SEE THEM OR NOT...
?

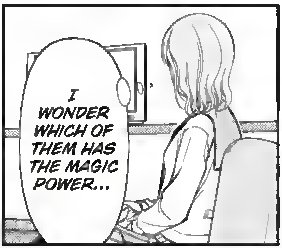
?
YOU CAN SEE MY DISCARDED TILES? YOU SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO...

I CAN SEE THEM CLEAR AS DAY...

YOU DON'T HAVE SOME KIND OF MAGIC POWER.
!!

EAST
WIND 2


BEFORE, THE PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF OTHER PEOPLE MADE NODOKA SO NERVOUS THAT SHE COULDN'T PLAY HER BEST...


I WONDER WHICH OF THEM HAS THE MAGIC POWER...

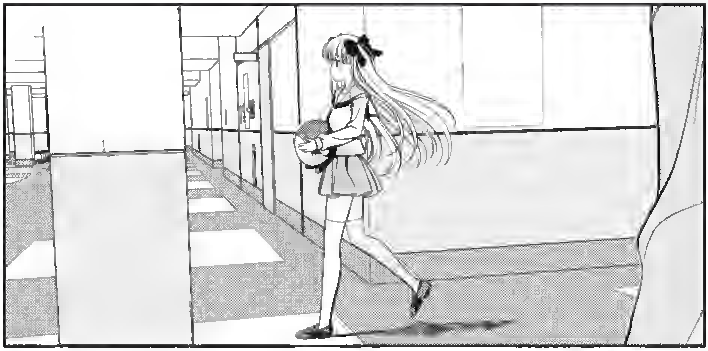
ONCE SHE "AWAKENED," EVEN PLAYING FACE-TO-FACE AGAINST SAKI DIDN'T FAZE HER.
...BUT SHE CHANGED DURING OUR TRAINING CAMP.

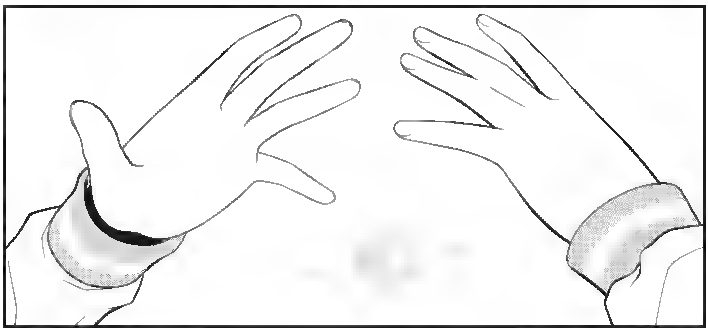
.....
NOW SHE PERCEIVES REAL-LIFE MAHJONG AS THOUGH IT'S OVERLAID WITH AN ONLINE GAME SCREEN!
...WHETHER SHE SENSES ME OR NOT?
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH...
AHHH ...
THEN I HAVE TO PLAY NORMAL MAHJONG WITH HER?
BUT ACTUALLY ...
...IT COULD BE MORE FUN THAN USUAL THAT WAY!

The second to last round is over —!!
In the second half, Tsuruga's Toyoko and Kiyosumi's Haramura showed us some impressive one-on-one fighting...
...but near the end, Ryumon-buchi and Kazekoshi joined in!
Overall, none of the teams achieved an over-whelming lead!!

And now, we enter...
Kiyosumi High School +6400
114900
Tsuruga Academy +9200
102600
Kazekoshi Girls' School −5100
101200
Kyumenbuchi High School −10500
Still, it's an unexpected result, as two unknown schools seized the lead from the top two schools from last year—

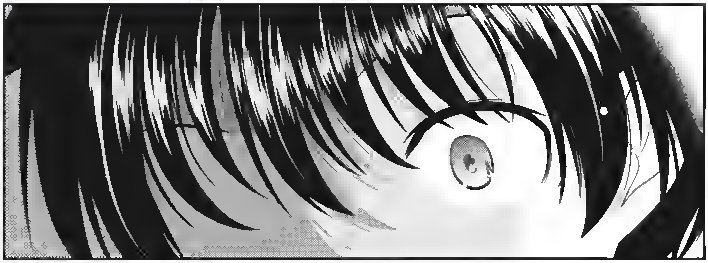
I'M HEADING OUT!
...the final round !!

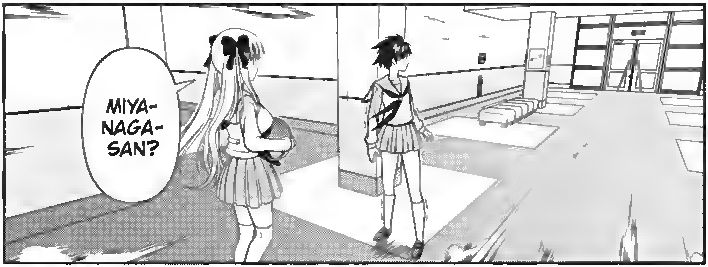




The final round —
From Tsuruga Academy, third-year *Yumi Kajiki*!!
From Kiyosumi High School, currently in the lead...
...Nodoka Haramura passes the baton to a fellow first-year...
...Saki Miya-naga!

CHEER
Playing in the final round for her prestigious school for the second year in a row...
...from Kazekoshi Girls' School, second-year *Kana Ikeda*!!
ROAR
And then there's Ikeda's fated opponent.
That's right...

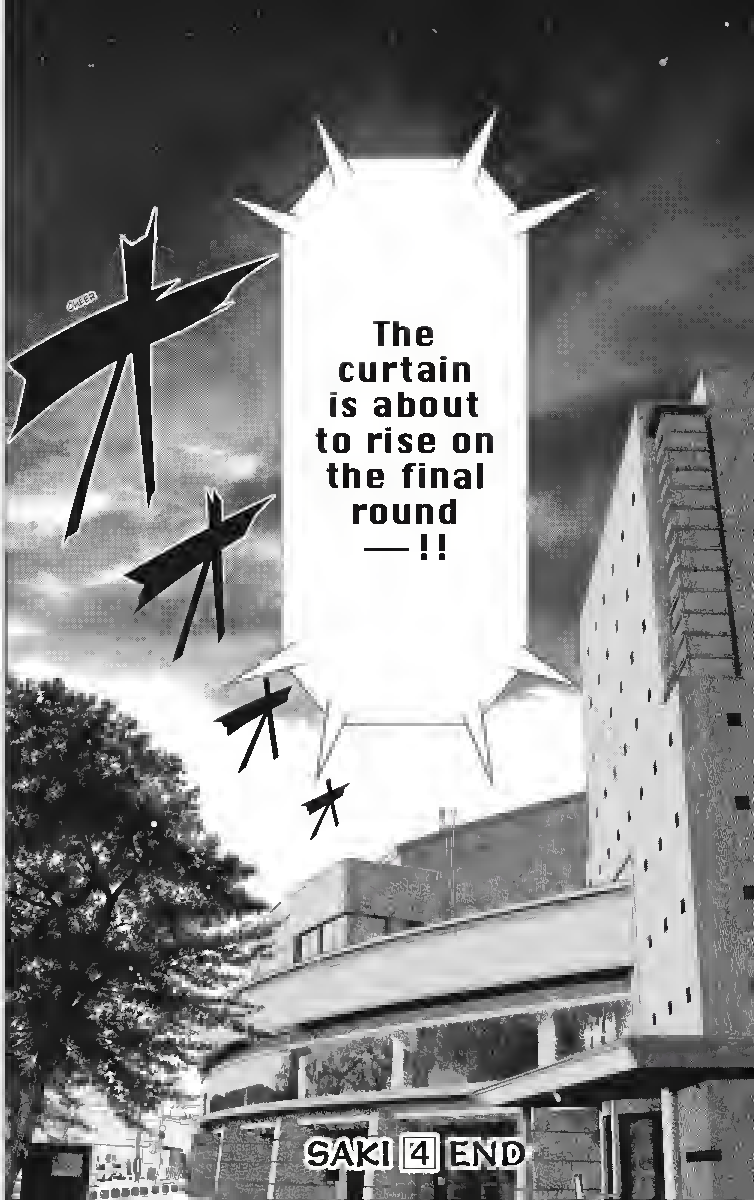



MIYA-NAGA-SAN?

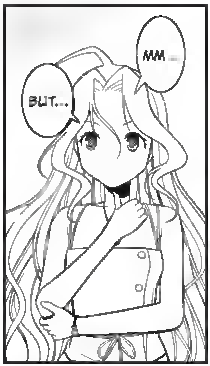
SHUTTER
SHUTTER
I'M FEELING IT...
...AGAIN!!
SHIVER

コッ
click
コッ
click
A second-year from Ryumon-buchi High School—
Last year's MVP, who showed us a battle so magnificent, she may have been divinely possessed!
The record-holder for most points gained at the national tournament !!

FLASH
Koromo
...
...
Amae!!
FLASH


The curtain is about to rise on the final round —!!
SAKI 4 END

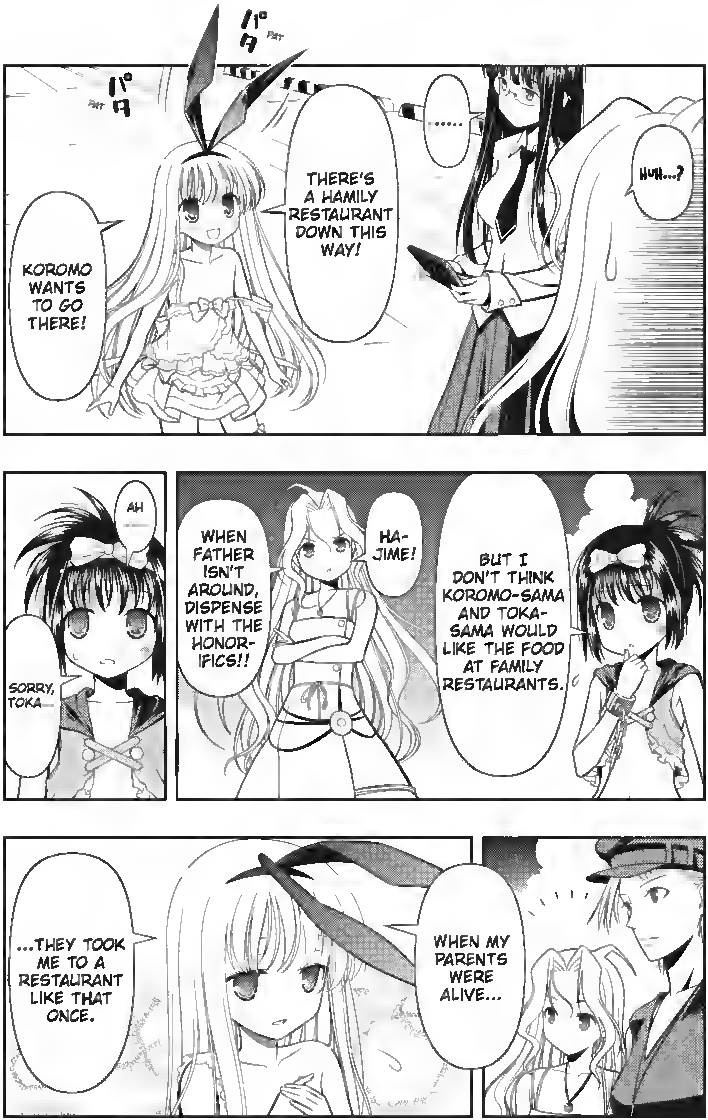
SAKI BONUS STORY
FLUFFY KOROMO AND THE TARTAR SAUCE
TEN MONTHS AGO. TOKYO, THE DAY BEFORE THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT —
THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL! EDO! TOKYO!
WOW!
THE VIEW IS SUPERB!
SHUT UUUP!
LOOK AT ALL THOSE SKY-SCRAPERS!
HOP!
ぴょんこ
HOP!
ぴょんこ

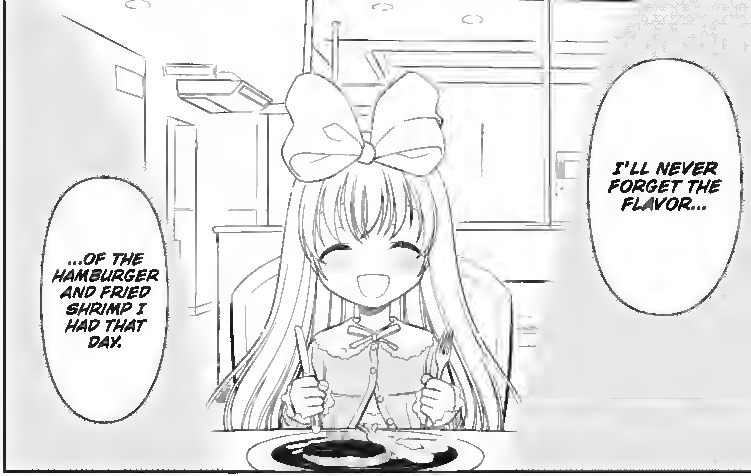

MM...
BUT...

I WANNA STOP THIS SIGHT-SEEING AND JUST RELAX AT THE HOTEL...
OUR MATCH DOES START EARLY TOMORROW MORNING.

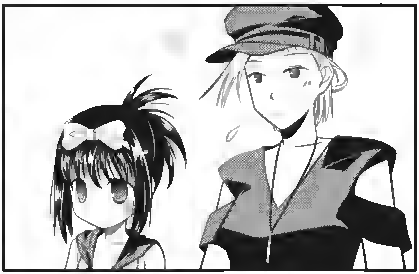
...FOR SOME REASON, I'M A LITTLE HUNGRY.

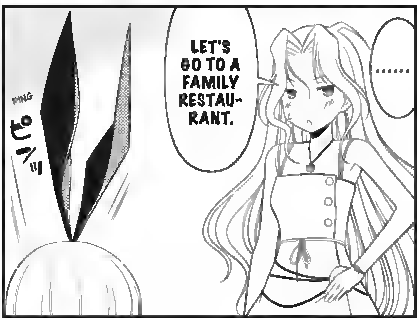
TOMOKI! I WONDER IF THERE'S A RESTAURANT NEARBY THAT WOULD SUIT MY TASTE BUDS.
I'LL SEARCH...
A HAMILY RESTAU-RANT!!

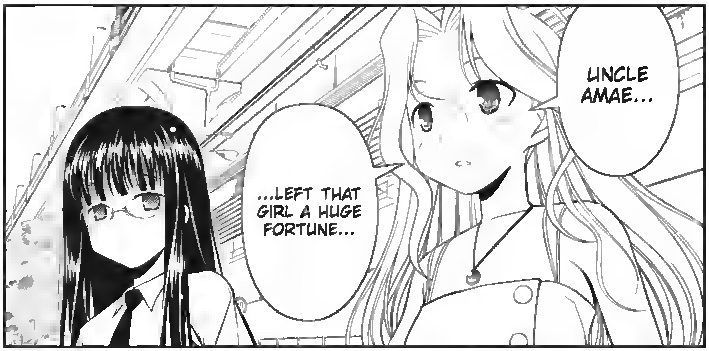

11°
9
11°
9
KOROMO WANTS TO GO THERE!
THERE'S A HAMILY RESTAURANT DOWN THIS WAY!
.....
HUH...?
AH
SORRY, TOKA...
WHEN FATHER ISN'T AROUND, DISPENSE WITH THE HONORIFICS!!
HA-JIME!
BUT I DON'T THINK KOROMO-SAMA AND TOKA-SAMA WOULD LIKE THE FOOD AT FAMILY RESTAURANTS.
...THEY TOOK ME TO A RESTAURANT LIKE THAT ONCE.
WHEN MY PARENTS WERE ALIVE...


I'LL NEVER FORGET THE FLAVOR...
...OF THE HAMBURGER AND FRIED SHRIMP I HAD THAT DAY.

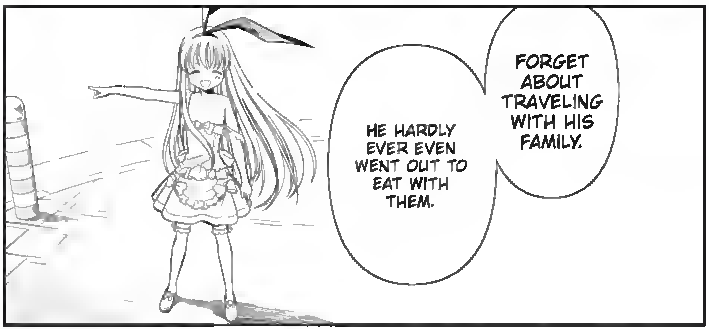
YAY!




LET'S GO TO A FAMILY RESTAU-RANT.
.....
PING

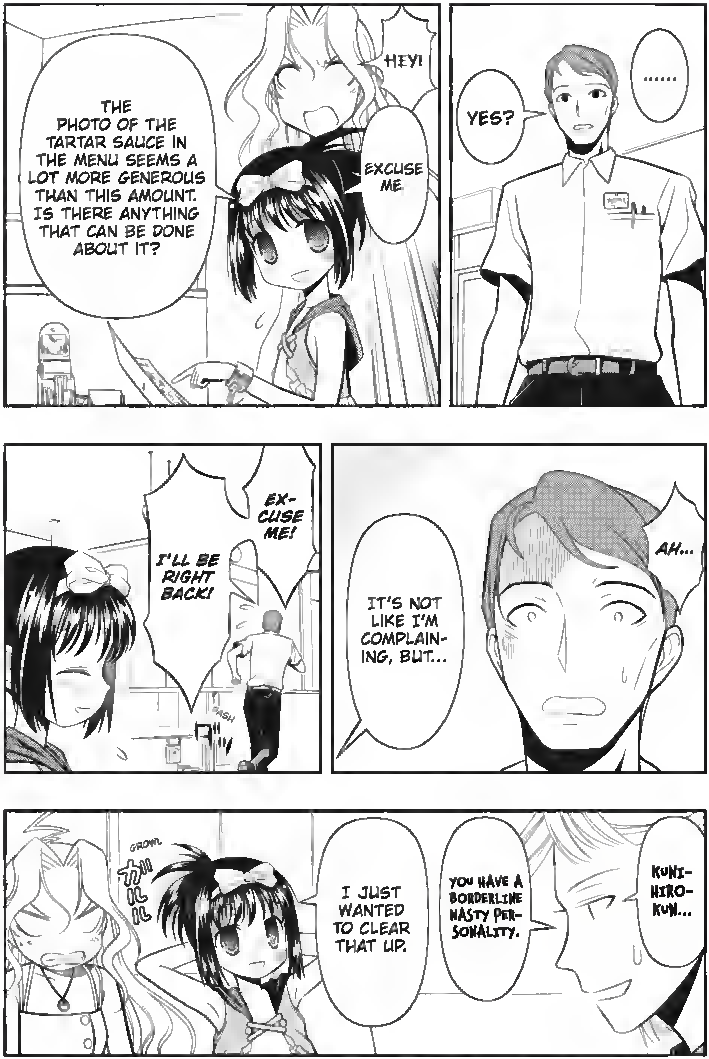

UNCLE AMAE...
...LEFT THAT GIRL A HUGE FORTUNE...

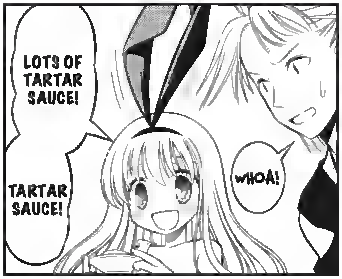
...BUT HE WAS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND DEAN OF SOME COLLEGE AT A RELATIVELY YOUNG AGE.
READING BOOKS WAS HIS ONLY INDULGENCE.

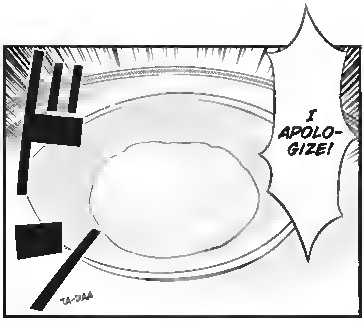

FORGET ABOUT TRAVELING WITH HIS FAMILY.
HE HARDLY EVER EVEN WENT OUT TO EAT WITH THEM.

FIVE PEOPLE, NON-SMOKING.
WELCOME!
JINGLE
I'M NOT THAT LITTLE!
AND WE'LL NEED ONE BOOSTER SEAT, PLEASE.
ALL RIGHT!
HERE YOU GO, HAM-BURGER ND FRIED SHRIMP.

JUST ONE DOLLOP OF TARTAR SAUCE?
WHAT IS THIS? THAT'S TERRIBLE!
DID KORO-MO...
...DO SOMETHING BAD TO DESERVE THIS?
RATTLE
ガタッ
TRICKLE
しわ


HEY!
EXCUSE ME.
THE PHOTO OF THE TARTAR SAUCE IN THE MENU SEEMS A LOT MORE GENEROUS THAN THIS AMOUNT. IS THERE ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?
.....
YES?
EX-CUSE ME!
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
AH...
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M COMPLAIN-ING, BUT...
GROWL
I JUST WANTED TO CLEAR THAT UP.
YOU HAVE A BORDERLINE NASTY PER-SONALITY.
KUNI-HIRO-KUN...

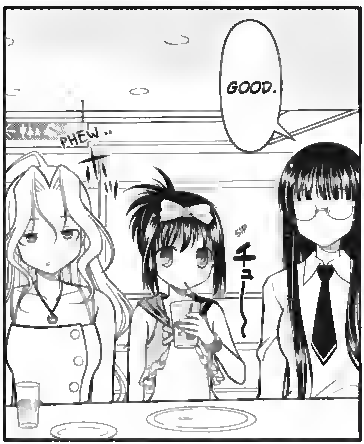

LOTS OF TARTAR SAUCE!
TARTAR SAUCE!
WHOA!

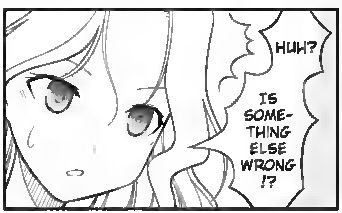

I APOLOGIZE!
TA-DAA

DELICIOUS!
ぱぁ
FLASH

MUNCH
モグ
MUNCH
モグ

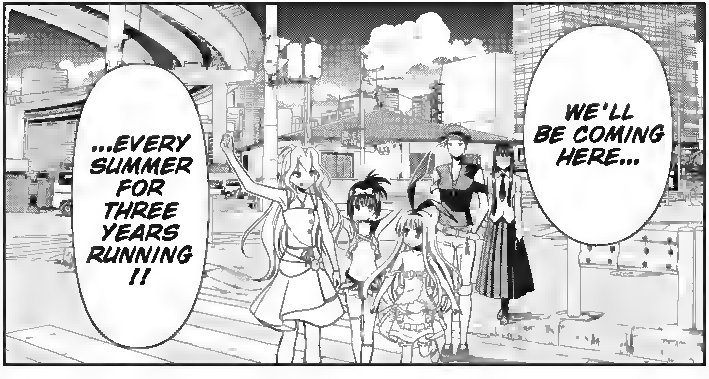
TRICKLE
しわ


GOOD.
PHEW..
SIP
チュー


HUH?
IS SOMETHING ELSE WRONG!?

I WAS THINKING BACK ON THE OLD DAYS, WHEN I WAS LONELY, BUT NOW MY LIFE IS LIVELY AND FULL OF FUN.
I HAVE VERY COMPLEX EMOTIONS.
ぽろ
ぽろ

I WANT TO...
...COME BACK TO TOKYO AGAIN WITH ALL OF YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


WE'LL BE COMING HERE...
...EVERY SUMMER FOR THREE YEARS RUNNING!!

Saki 4

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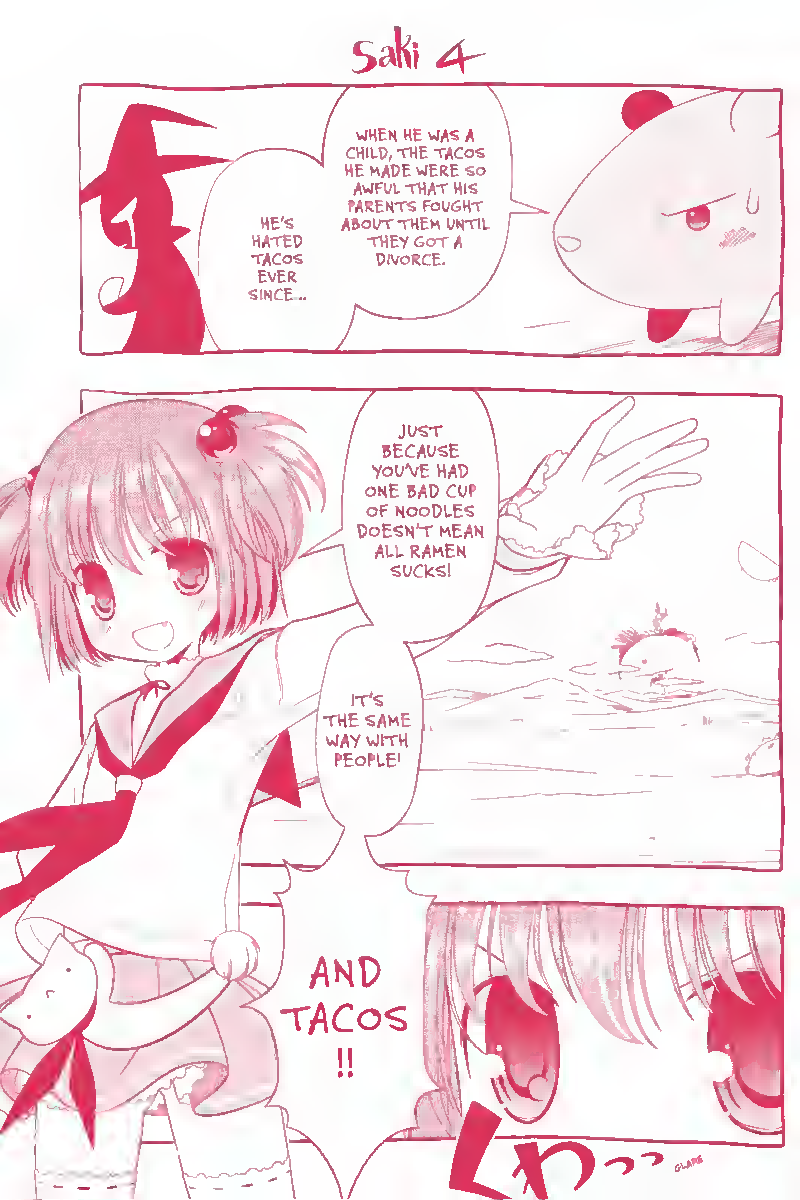
HE'S HATED TACOS EVER SINCE...
WHEN HE WAS A CHILD, THE TACOS HE MADE WERE SO AWFUL THAT HIS PARENTS FOUGHT ABOUT THEM UNTIL THEY GOT A DIVORCE.
JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE HAD ONE BAD CUP OF NOODLES DOESN'T MEAN ALL RAMEN SUCKS!
IT'S THE SAME WAY WITH PEOPLE!
AND TACOS !!
しゃっ
GLARE

IT ISN'T GOOD TO LOOK AT ONE PART OF SOMETHING AND DECLARE THE WHOLE THING BAD
OOF!
LET'S GO!
WHERE?
TO SEE THAT TER-RIBLE KING!!
WHOOSH

SAKI 4

Ritz Kobayashi

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